

JOURNAL

OF A

TRIP TO CALIFORNIA,

BY THE

OVERLAND ROUTE ACROSS THE PLAINS IN 1850—51.

BY E. S. INGALLS.

WAUKEGAN:

TOBEY & CO., BOOK, CARD AND JOB PRINTERS.

1852.

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PREFACE.

In offering this Journal to the public, the publishers believe that a benefit will be conferred on many who are desirous of visiting the Eldorado of the nineteenth century. This is one object we have in publishing it; but our principal object is to gratify the numerous friends of Judge Ingalls by furnishing them with his journal in a form easily transmitted through the mails to the different parts of the country. Without claiming any merit as a literary production, the author has simply given us a plain statement of incidents as he saw them. Without further remark, we present his work to the public.

PUBLISHERS.

Journal.

In offering this journal to the public, the writer makes no pretensions to authorship, but believes that, although it be written in plain, off-hand style, nevertheless, some portions of it may be interesting to the public, and that if any who may chance to read it are about to start for "Eldorado," they may derive some benefit from it, whether they go over the Plains, or by water. The writer will only attempt to describe objects and incidents as he saw them.

We commenced our journey from Lake county, Ill., on the 27th day of March, (or rather I did, the team not being ready, and I having some business to transact at Rock River.)

March, 28—I left Hainesville, and traveled to Franklinville, McHenry Co., at night a distance of 30 miles.

29th. Reached Belvidere about noon, and spent the remainder of the day with John S. Curtis, Esq. Belvidere is a thriving village in Boon co., situated in the midst of a fertile and beautiful country. 18 miles.

30th.—Left Belvidere about noon, after having made a very agreeable visit with Mr. Curtis, and traveled as far as Rockford, on Rock river, where I found E. Ford, one of our company, and several others from Lake county. I found Ford taking care of a California emigrant from Wisconsin, by the name of Maynard, who was very sick at the Rockford House. 12 miles.

31st. I remained at Rockford, it being Sunday. Rockford is one of the most active and prosperous villages on the Rock River, and when the contemplated railroad from Chicago to Galena shall be completed, it will double its size and population. The water power furnished by damming the Rock River is unequaled. It is used now to some extent, but is capable of driving six times the machinery which it now does.

April 1st. Remained at Rockford. Maynard died this night about 11 o'clock. He had the satisfaction of seeing his wife before he died, she having been sent for by the landlord of the Rockford House. How many will be cut down by disease on this crusade to California. How many will die where they can have no friendly hand to alleviate their sufferings, time only will tell.

2d. Started down the Rock River—travelled thirty miles through a very good country, and stopped over night at the house of an old townsman and friend, L. Scott, Esq. 30 miles.

3d. Stormy and cold; went over to Mr. J. R. Merrill's, another old townsman, and spend the day.

4th. Remained at Merrill's—visited Grand de Tour, a thriving village on the Rock River, about four miles from the house of my friend.

5th. Remaining still with Merrill. Disagreeable, stormy weather.—This evening J. and I. B. Ingalls came up with team which left Hainesville, April 2d.

6th. Bought a horse of Merrill to-day. Bade Mr. M.'s family adieu, and felt like leaving home again, so agreeably had the time passed in the society of my friend and his accomplished family. Found one of our horses lame with a sprained ankle; got the materials and made some liniment (by directions of Mr. Merrill,) and I must say it proved the most effectual remedy for sprains, galls, and other injuries to horses, that I ever saw used, and we had good reason to be thankful to Mr. Merrill for imparting the knowledge of making it to us, before we got through with our trip. We traveled this day 24 miles down Rock river—weather pleasant, and roads good. 24 miles.

7th. Sunday—traveled about 25 miles, pleasant weather, but some bad roads. 25 miles.

8th. Traveled about 25 miles to Rock Island. Pleasant weather; beginning to get into the track of California teams. Took in some hard bread, visited Rock Island Lodge, of I. O. O. F., where I found a cordial welcome as befitted brothers. 25 miles.

April 9th. Crossed the Mississippi to Davenport, Iowa; took in 25 bushels of corn—paid for shelled corn 38 cts. per bushel, in the ear 30 cts. Purchased also most of our other necessities, excepting meat and flour. I was surprised to find Davenport and Rock Island such large places.—They lie opposite each other on the Mississippi, and about three miles above the mouth of Rock river. They are surrounded by a country of fertile soil on each side of the river, and bid fair in a few more years to become very important cities. We left Davenport at noon, and traveled to Hickory Grove, Scott co.—roads very bad, with a snow storm towards night. 14 miles.

10th. Left Hickory Grove in the morning and made 25 miles to Tipton, the county seat of Cedar county. Roads very bad, mud deep, mostly prairie, but good land. We got sloughed once to-day, and had to carry our loads on our backs. We found Tipton full of California teams, and had to let our horses stand out for the first time, although it was a cold disagreeable night. 25 miles.

11th. Left Tipton in the morning and reached Cedar River about noon—found the road bad enough, but better than it had been for a couple of days past. We ferried across the Cedar river and drove a few miles, and put up with a crowd of California emigrants at the log house of an Irishman by the name of Nolan, a clever man, who did the best his slender means permitted to make us comfortable. During the night it rained and snowed, and our horses had an uncomfortable time of it, and we did not fare much better, as there were eleven of us camped on the floor of a log shanty, with the chinking pretty well knocked out, so that the wind, rain and snow had a free sweep amongst us. 15 miles.

12th. Very windy and cold—started on account of our horses, and drove twelve miles, to Iowa City, where we arrived about noon, after one of the most disagreeable day's drive I ever experienced. We laid over the rest of the day on account of the wind. We here found quite a number of our Lake co. friends, who had got here in advance of us. 12 miles.

13th. Remained in Iowa City; the wind still high and the weather very cold. Iowa City is quite a place, with a population, as I am told, of about 2500. It is the seat of government for the State of Iowa, which

is its only recommendation. It is situated on the Iowa river, which is navigable at high water for steamboats of a small class. The State House will be a very handsome building when finished; it is built of hewed stone, on the bank of the Iowa river, and when the work is properly finished will do honor to the State. This is a gathering point for California teams, and the town is now full of them lying by on account of bad weather. It is supposed there are 100 wagons here now, and they keep coming; besides, there are numbers wind bound at the Cedar river.

We are stopping at Swan's Hotel, the best house in the city, the register of which shows the names of great numbers of our town and county people who started before us—and more are coming after. This afternoon, another team, or the advance guard of it, from our town came up. We now begin to find every thing higher as we get farther advanced towards the frontiers. Corn is worth here fifty cents a bushel, and report says that towards Council Bluffs there is no feed for horses and cattle of any kind or at any price.

14th. Sunday. We still lie over; the weather has become more moderate, though it is still cold; the wind has gone down, so that it is more comfortable travelling, consequently most of the teams have left town on their route. They stretch off across the prairie this morning as far as the eye can reach, quite an army of themselves; what we shall find when we get to the Missouri river, it is impossible to tell; judging from present appearances there will be one of the largest armies congregated that were ever got together at one time on this continent. Most of the teams that go to-day head for St. Joseph, the prospect being better on the road that way, and after they get there, for feed for teams than on the Council Bluffs route. We are all in too much of a hurry, for there is no probability of our being able to leave the frontiers before the 10th of May, for want of feed, consequently we shall have to tarry two weeks at some point, and we think it best lie by at several different points, than all at once.

April 15th. Monday. Left Iowa City this morning, for Washington, county seat of Washington co. Country mostly rolling prairie for the first 15 miles; soil very good, and good road, being the military road built by Government. Streams all bridged with the best bridges that I have seen in Iowa. The balance of the road to Washington—having left the military road—is very bad; no bridges; got sloughed in a creek, occasioned by our hindmost everer breaking; after unloading we got our wagon out with one span of horses. This creek was within about a mile and a half of Washington. I think there is no better evidence of the want of enterprise in the inhabitants, than to find such places unbridged on main roads near villages. We went on with one span of horses, but it being very dark we got sloughed again, and had to leave our wagon and go on to the village, where we arrived cross and hungry about eight o'clock, having made 28 miles, and had the hardest day's work since we left home. However, we found an obliging landlord, which made up somewhat for our trouble. The country for the last part is flat prairie and very wet. I should think it worthless. 28 miles.

16. Unloaded our wagon and got it out of the mud again this morning & started for Brighton, Washington co. 11 miles. Country rolling, the best

land on the east side of the Skunk river, that I had seen in Iowa, being rolling openings. Crossed the Skunk river on a ferry. Arrived at Brighton about 2 o'clock, P. M.; commenced snowing soon after, and we had one of the hardest snow storms of the season. Continued snowing until midnight. The town is full of California teams, some going to Council Bluffs, and some to St. Joseph. 11 miles

17th. Laid over at Brighton. Snow this morning about two inches deep; the day pleasant but cool; the wind in the North West. Brighton is quite a small village, has three or four stores, one steam saw mill, besides a fair share of mechanics and other business men. We found good accommodations, with the worthy landlord, Mr. Yates, and spent a pleasant day. The snow went off by noon, but left the roads muddy.

18th. Left Brighton this morning for Fairfield, Jefferson co., where we arrived without accident, but found the roads muddy; weather warm and showery, most like spring of any day this month. 15 miles.

19th. Stopped last night at the Eagle Hotel, and I must say it was the nastiest hole I ever got into, and everything else was in perfect keeping, and to make matters even worse, the landlord charged the highest bill that we had paid on the road.

Started this morning for Iowa ville, sixteen miles, where we arrived about four o'clock, P. M., and put up for the night. (By the way, I found an old townsman and school mate in Fairfield, that I had not seen for thirteen years,—Ezra Brown, Esq., District Attorney for that judicial district, and editor of a paper there. Of course I stopped to visited him an hour or two, and then passed on on this journey of time. Shall we ever meet again?)

20th. Crossed the Desmoines river this morning. This, as the Hosiers say, is a right smart chance of a river, between two and three hundred yards wide, and would be navigable for steamboats one hundred miles above here, if it were not for the dams below, of which I understand there are nine. Iowa ville is situated on the bank, and is only a hamlet of log huts, with a grocery or two, but has a steam mill building, and one in operation on the other bank. We crossed on a ferry—charge 75 cts. Most of our route to-day lay through the timber, and the best timber too, I have seen in Iowa, but we have had dreadful roads, the worst, in fact, on the journey.

We arrived at Drakesville about four o'clock and put up for the night, although we could get no "roughnes" for our team, (as they call hay here;) in fact we are getting where we find but little hay or grain. Matters look squally ahead, no hay, and grass not an ell high, and growing downwards at that. Grain we care nothing about as we have twenty days feed on bread, which will be more than we can consume before we reach St. Joseph.

20th. Drakesville is a small village of log houses, with a store, blacksmith shop, &c. It is situated in Davis county. The inhabitants I understand are mostly Campbelites, or Disciples. They had a meeting to-day, and are having one this evening. There is a lodge of the Sons of Temperance here, too, who are having their meeting over my head. I did not expect to find anything of the kind in this back country. Good speed to

them. I understand they have twenty members, and have two or three initiate to-night. 20 miles.

21st. Laid over at Drakeville, it being Sunday, remained all day.—Two women and a man were baptized in a mud-hole to-day by a Disciple preacher. Got no roughness, as the people here call hay; our horses had to live on corn, in consequence of which we foundered one.

22d. Left Drakeville this morning, had one of the most muddy road on the route. Camped at night for the first time, on a small brook; could get no hay—had to cut dry prairie grass with our knives. Made twenty miles, passed one small village of log houses, (Unionville) and camped within four miles of Centreville, county seat of Appanose co. 20 miles.

23d. Passed Centreville this day, and made 18 miles over some of the worst roads I ever saw in the western states.

Though the country generally is the best I have seen in Iowa, being well timbered, and excellent prairie, I do not like the water, it is too milky. No hay—camped by a run. 18 miles.

24th. Heard a wild turkey gobbler near our camp, for the first time. Jonathan started after him, but did not get a shot at him. We are now at noon within 30 rods of the Missouri state line, and right glad are we to get out of Iowa. Have been in company the last two days with 3 teams from Mineral Point, Wis. The weather to-day is very pleasant & warm; the warmest day we have had this spring. We find some green grass to-day. We have a good road with the exception of one bad creek. One of our comrades got his horses down in the mud and went back to roll him out; the rest of us passed without much trouble. We traveled ten miles into Missouri, and camped by a small stream. We here saw wild turkeys for the first time. The country is mostly prairie, and very good. 20 miles.

25th. Very warm and pleasant; made about twenty miles over a pleasant country, rather uneven, diversified with woods and prairie, thinly settled. Saw several wild turkeys; there appears to be plenty of such game here. 20 miles.

26th. Passed through heavy timber to-day for most of the way.—Crossed the north and middle fork of Grand river, and passed the village of Princeton, which is a small hamlet of log houses about one half of which are groceries. Tried to buy some flour—found but an 100 weight in the village, and they asked \$4 for that. I concluded I would not take it for two reasons: First, if they had but one cwt in the village, they needed it themselves; and next, I did not like to be shaved well enough to pay that price. They asked \$1 50 per bushel for corn.

Uncle Jo, one of our comrades from Mineral Point, and myself, went turkey hunting last night (by moonlight.) We rambled some eight or ten miles, and got back about 2 o'clock in the morning, minus turkeys, not having seen one.

The day has been excessively warm, and we are in hopes of having grass soon, which would be welcome as our horses have had nothing of hay kind but dry prairie grass, which we cut ourselves (and some nights we could not get that) for the last hundred miles, and we do not expect to find any more. We cannot camp now without doing it in a jam. There are some 30 or 40 wagons camped around us now, oxen, horses, &c. We are camped to-night on the Middle Fork of Grand river. 20 miles.

27th. We had a heavy shower with thunder last night: in the morning the wind was in the north-west, and cold. We left our camping ground early, and made 26 miles. We passed one small village to-day—Bethany, similar to the last, i. e. groceries. Have passed through a beautiful country to-day, alternately timber and prairie, some of it has been settled eleven years, but we cannot buy a loaf of bread, a dozen eggs, or any hay or straw, or in fact anything to eat for man or beast, with the exception of bacon, and that raised itself. We were lucky enough to lay in supplies for both man and beast before we got into this region. It is a great pity that Missouri is a slave state; were it a free state, so that free northern men would settle in it, all this great region of valuable land would be settled and improved, and there is no part of the western country that can excel the northern part of Missouri in beauty and fertility. It is better timbered, and watered than Illinois, and is rather more uneven, but no more so than is necessary to make good farming land. 26 miles

28th. Sunday. We started again this morning and travelled ten miles to the main branch of the Grand river, which we crossed and camped. This is the last timber before crossing a prairie of 25 miles in width. Some go on intending to camp on the prairie, but the wind being cold, (from the north-west) we concluded to lay over until to-morrow. Our camping ground looks like the camp of an army. Horses, picketed tents, with the star spangled banners flying, wagons standing around, while lying by the side of logs and trees are brawny, sun-burnt men, sunning themselves, and taking their ease. Within thirty minutes after we camped there were 21 wagons camped. Since then they have been coming in and camping continually. How many there are at this time, would be difficult to say, and still they come. But this is but a foretaste of what we shall see at St. Joseph, which we expect to reach by Tuesday night, it being 44 miles from this place, we are told. On the opposite side of the river, and half a mile from here, is Gentryville, the county seat of Gentry county. It is a right smart place, as they say out this way. It has a saw and grist mill, two taverns, with a fair sprinkling of stores and workshops. I should think the water power very good for this country, and capable of supplying power for much more machinery than now in use. 10 miles.

29th. Left Grand river and crossed the Great Prairie, passed some teams camped that had lost 22 horses, (but found 20 of them and were hunting for the other two.) Got in with a large train which hindered us so much that we ran by, and made 34 miles for the purpose of keeping ahead of them. Country good, but too much prairie. Passed Platt river, and the village of Rochester. Good mills on the Little Platte river at this village. 34 miles.

30th. Left our camping ground and traveled 14 miles to St. Joseph. Weather very cold and windy—no grass nor hay. We have traveled 200 miles without grass or hay, but have cut dry prairie grass where we could find it. Camped in a ravine half a mile north of St. Joseph. St. Joseph is quite a village, and doing a great deal of business at this time. But the way they fleece California emigrants is worth noticing. I should advise all going the overland route to take every thing along with them that they can of small weight, as every little thing costs three or four times as much here as at home. The markets are filled with broken

town horses jockeyed up for the occasion, and unbroken mules, which they assure you are handy as sheep. It is the greatest place for gambling, and all other rascality that I was ever in. We have to stand guard over our horses as much as if we were in the Indian country. It is said that one or two men have been shot by the emigrants while in the act of stealing horses. Here let me before leaving the State of Missouri say one word in relation to the country. We traveled about one hundred and eighty miles through the north-west part of the State which is mostly unsettled. We found the country the best I had ever seen in the great Mississippi Valley, and I had seen a great share of it. It is a perfect paradise for the agriculturist, the manufacturer and the hunter. The soil is warm and fertile, the wild prairie grass growing as high as a man's waist on the uplands. An abundance of good timber skirts the streams. The land is rolling, approaching the hilly, and well watered by rivers, brooks, and springs of pure clear water, running over gravelly or rocky beds in clear banks, free from sloughs or marshes. The streams furnish an abundance of the best water power suitable for driving all kinds of machinery. The prairies and woods are filled with abundance of deer, wild turkeys and other game, and of wild honey. The river bottoms are covered with endless quantities of plums, sweet grapes, and various other wild fruits in the greatest abundance. Nature has seemed to lavish her best gifts on this country in the greatest profusion; yet with all it remains a wilderness, only inhabited by a few straggling squatters whose whole aim is to raise what corn and bacon they can consume, and kill a sufficiency of game to supply their daily wants. Why is it so? Is it because it is one or 200 miles back from the Mississippi? This cannot be the reason, for thousands are now emigrating farther back into the wilds of Minnesota. Is it not owing to, and one of the fruits of, the blighting curse of slavery?—the driving of free men of the northern states to emigrate to more uncongenial soil and climate, rather than settle in a slave state. This is a question which all Missourians who love their State should investigate. The west, and north-west part of Missouri is capable of supporting a population larger than the whole present population of the State. It is a country superior in soil, climate, water, timber and other natural advantages, to any portion of the great Mississippi Valley, yet it is unsettled, and apparently will be for a long time, the current of emigration being turned into Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, simply because men raised in free states do not like the idea of settling in slave states. Would it not be better for Missouri to abolish slavery, and thereby cause her millions of acres of rich lands to be settled by intelligent farmers, with villages springing up on every water course, than to retain her few thousands of slaves, the profit of which to the owner is really questionable? But I do not intend to write a lecture on slavery, but these thoughts would intrude themselves upon me as I was traveling through this beautiful wilderness country; for I can say with the greatest sincerity that I know of no part of the world that it is so desirable to locate in as this, but with this objection the country never will be settled densely, for the simple reason that emigrants from the South prefer going to a more southern climate, where their negroes can be made more profitable raising cotton.

and sugar, to going into the west part of Missouri, and emigrants from the North object to settling in a slave state.

May 1st. Remained encamped as before. Weather more moderate but too cold for grass to grow.

2d. Remain camped as before. Sent down the river five miles and got 30 bushels of corn in the ear at 90 cents per bushel; bought 11 bushels of shelled corn at the camp for one dollar per bushel, which we got ground into meal. Commenced raining in the afternoon, and rained all night; we had a very disagreeable time of it.

3d. Got our stores mostly on board and crossed the Missouri, and drove six miles to the Bluffs, and camped. We found the whole six miles a camping ground, and a good sized city of tents at the Bluffs, probably six thousand men. Weather still cold. 6 miles.

4th. Remain camped at the same place. Went back to the town and got the remainder of our supplies; had a very warm day, but a cold night before it—ice made $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of an inch thick.

5th. Sunday. Remained camped at the same place; had a pleasant day. There was a funeral down at the lower end of the camp to-day; it was about a mile from our camp, I did not learn the particulars. Met at night to try and organize a company; chose a committee and adjourned until the next night at five o'clock.

6th. Remained at the same place. Went to town to try the Post Office again before we started, but found nothing. By the way, I forgot to say that we are in the Nebraska Territory now, and on the Indian lands. The Indians do not like it very well that the whites camp on their ground on account of cutting timber. (There are about 500 of them camped near us.) The men met again to organize; I was not present, but they made out nothing. We concluded to go with the same company that we had been in: Trimble, Sublett, Ainsly, Welch and Trammel & Co. from Mineral Point, Wisconsin.

7th. Had a bad night last night; it rained and snowed nearly all night. Had about two inches of snow on the ground this morning. It cleared off about 10 A. M., when we struck our tent and started on the long journey. Weather came off fine and warm; find some grass but none to amount to anything; still have to cut dry grass. We made 20 miles to-day, and camped on a small creek. We have nine teams in company that expect to go through together, although we are not organized, viz: (besides myself) Thomas Trimble, and William Sublett & Co., Stephen Ainsly and party, Litwiler and company, and Daughterty and company. We have mechanics of every trade, and various musicians, and while I am writing, one of the company is enlivening the solitude with a fine toned key bugle; one ought to be here in the wilderness to know the value of music. We have 37 men in our party, and if the other teams come up and join us we shall have 41. This I think is a large enough party, as we cannot camp any where after this without being near other companies, several of whom are now camped above and below us. We expect to go as far as the Indian Mission to-morrow. 12 miles.

8th. Made 14 miles over a rather hilly country, and passed the Indian Mission, and camped two miles from it on a creek. We found some fine farms at this mission; it was a pleasing sight to us to see the wheat fields;

they appeared to compare well with the wheat fields of Illinois. Passed some dead horses on the road to-day; also some graves of those buried last year. Several teams came up and joined us this night. 14 miles.

9th. Traveled about 25 miles to-day over a prairie country, passed several more graves made last year. We have not seen any fresh ones yet, but found more dead horses. This is the result of feeding too much corn with no hay or grass. The grass seems to be getting a little better as we get on. Have had a very hot day, and dry, and good roads with the exception of two or three mud holes. Some more teams came up and camped with us—we turned off from the road and camped on a small creek. 25 miles.

10th. Had 21 wagons in our train this morning. We call all hands at 4 o'clock A. M. now, and start about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6. Had some rain last night, when the wind shifted to the north-west, very cold, and we have had one of the best roads to-day that I ever saw; plank roads are no comparison to it, and have passed over the most beautiful prairie country in the world, with little timber, and that dwarf burr oak, but the soil is equal to the best in Illinois. We turned off from the road about one mile and camped on a branch, about 3 o'clock, P. M. The grass is still improving. We have about 75 men in our company, which is too many, so many cannot agree. While I am writing, two of them are very near fighting, and the captain, Wm. Soublett stands between them, as this is the only means of keeping them apart. We cannot go on long with so many, I think. Passed some more graves, and dead horses to-day; in fact we we expect to every day. It looks bad to see so many at this end of the route. 25 miles.

11th. Drove 22 miles to-day. Passed a Chicago wagon broken down at a creek; Hugunin, of Waukegan, belonged to the party. The country is prairie, without timber, excepting a few scattering trees on the creeks. We were delayed some time by a train of ox teams at a creek; while we were watering I fell asleep, and came very near being left behind the team. Ford came back and sroused me. I stood guard last night, which was the cause of my being so sleepy; passed several dead horses, and the graves of many buried last year. 22 miles.

12th. Sunday. Not having a good camping spot we concluded to travel, and made 30 miles, and reached Blue river. Here we found a large city of tents, and preaching. There were probably 2000 men camped within two miles of the crossing; and here we found wagons broken down last year, with irons of those burnt. Voted two teams out of the train this morning for disobedience of orders. The night was cold, but the day was warm. We found some last year's graves, besides the usual amount of dead horses. This point is called 120 miles from St. Joseph, but I think it is more. Roads good.

Blue River, or as it is commonly called, the Big Blue, is a beautiful clear stream, about eight rods wide, and at this time about three feet deep. It is a favorite camping ground for California emigrants. It has a skirt of timber, mostly cotton wood, from 8 to 100 rods wide along its west bank, and generally plenty of grass may be found. Sometimes however the emigrant is detained here for two or three weeks by the high water, when his only consolation is in hunting antelope and wild tur-

kies, of which game there is an abundant supply on this river, and in fishing. We caught a few small cat-fish after we had camped, but did not have time to try the qualities of the stream for fish to any great extent. This stream is in the Pawnee country, and consequently I would advise all emigrants who hunt remote from the road and their trains, to be on their guard, for the Pawnees are a very treacherous, hostile race, and would not be likely to omit of an opportunity offered to strip a solitary hunter and send him in minus his gun, clothes, and perfectly naked, for they seem to be a people much given to such practical jokes, as some who have traveled this road can testify. 30 miles.

13th. Made about 25 miles to-day, but found but little grass. Have had a good road, and a very hot day. Litwiler and myself scouted to-day for a good camping ground, and found one where there was good grass and water, but no wood except a few dry willows, which we made answer our wants for the night. We had the misfortune to burst one of our inside hub bands whilst wedging up the boxes this evening, which, although a small matter in the States, yet may prove a very serious one out here on the plains, two hundred miles from a blacksmith's shop, as it may be the means of losing our wagon. 25 miles.

14th. Made an early start and traveled 28 miles; passed a new made grave, (made this morning) of a young man who accidentally shot himself through the head, whilst in the act of taking a rifle out of the wagon, with the muzzle towards him. He was from Illinois. We have had a dry, hot day, and the dust has been very annoying to us. Litwiler and myself scoured the creek bottoms to-day again in search of irons of wagons that had been burnt, and succeeded in finding some hub bands, with which I repaired our wagon so that it answered as well as before it was broken. We turned off from the road this evening about a mile, and camped by a branch of the Little Blue river, where we found a plentiful supply of grass, wood and water. Litwiler killed a wild turkey this evening, which was very fat. We have a beautiful camping ground as the heart could desire; our wagons are circled, with the tents on the outside like a Tartar village, on the side of a gentle sloping knoll, at the base of which stretches off to the river, a beautiful grove of timber through which runs a clear sparkling brook made by a copious spring which arises from the ground only a few rods from our encampment. Our horses are feeding about in sight on the side hills, cropping the rich grass, an abundance of which they have not had before since we started on this long journey. Indeed we look, if we except the wagons, more like a wandering band of Tartars than a company of christians bound on a business excursion; and the appearance of our men does not tend to destroy the illusion, as sunburnt and bearded with their belts stuck full of bowie knives and revolvers, they lounge about in groups on the ground around the camp fires, or busy themselves amongst the horses, or in the various sports which are got up by the travelers on the plains to while away the time. But it requires a more able pen than mine to describe, vividly, a scene like this. To see it and feel it in all its beauty, one must be hundreds of miles from civilization, out on those great ocean like prairies, where the sight of a tree is welcome to the traveler as the sight of a sail to the mariner when he has been for a long time traversing an unknown

sea. He must be there on a balmy sunset eve, after a long and weary march over arid plains, destitute of water, and suffocated with the dust. Then when he can find a camping ground combining all the blessings of grass, good water and beautiful groves, all that the traveler on the plains holds essential to human comfort, he will truly appreciate a scene of this kind, but to the dwellers in cities, who know nothing of the beauties of nature in Nature's temple, the vast wilderness, no description would give a life-like picture of such a scene. 28 miles.

15th. Remained at the same camp to-day to recruit our horses, and make some repairs on the wagons, shoe horses, &c. A part of the men have been hunting—some of them have just returned, it being noon, and report having seen a great many antelopes, wild turkeys, wolves, &c.; but have brought in nothing, with the exception of Fuller, who has just come in with a back load of clams of muscles tied up in his shirt, he not having any other means of bringing his prize, having stripped himself of that very necessary garment and constructed it into a bag for that purpose. Perhaps by night they may succeed in getting some kind of game for a change. I have been busy repairing the hub of my wagon, while others are equally busy, shoeing horses, washing clothes, and attending to other necessary evils of a camp life. This evening I went out and took tea, (as the old ladies would have it at home, in the settlements,) that is, I went to the tent of friends Litwiler, Porter, and Drake, and helped eat the turkey which Litwiler shot last night, and we had quite a sociable time of it, none the less so from the novelty of taking tea out in this great wilderness, where perhaps the foot of civilized man never trod before—and one thing I can say with candor, that unlike many tea parties in more civilized regions, we had no scandal to talk over to give zest to the enjoyment of our tea drinking, although we did dwell somewhat on our homes, wives, children, fathers, brothers, sisters and friends. One wagon left us this morning, being anxious to get on.

16th. Traveled 25 miles this day over a barren, volcanic country. The face of the country is prairie diversified with sandy and rocky knobs, with no water fit for man to drink, although there is some in muddy pools that the horses may drink as a last resort. The country is destitute of timber, and has every appearance of having been acted upon by volcanoes, and taking it altogether, it has been the most dreary day's drive that we have had yet. We have had an exceedingly hot day, and the dust has been suffocating. The ground is so dry that grass cannot grow.

We camped this night on a dry branch of the Little Blue river, where we could get some water of very poor quality. Found less grass here than at any place back, which is very discouraging, for there has not been enough yet at any place but one, to give our horses what they required. We found a company camped here who intend to stop here three days, and if no rain falls in that time to turn back to the States, but that is what we will never do, for we will go on until we get through, or perish in the attempt; let what will come, our company are determined to go through. 25 miles.

17th. Our company held a council and elected me Captain of the train this morning, which is by no means a desirable post, as it is attended with greater responsibility and much more care and labor than a

less noted position. However there was no help for it, the company unanimously insisting on my acquiescence, so I was forced to yield to the "public voice," and accordingly entered upon the discharge of my duties.

We struck our tents at half past six A. M. and crossed the branch where we became the involuntary witnesses of a terrible accident which happened to a train that started from above us about the time we left. As we approached the main road we were alongside of them, and some of our company finding old friends in the other train, both trains were stopped to have a little friendly conversation. A few moments afterwards a dog belonging to the other train, frightened the mules belonging to one of their wagons, ahead of which were a span of high spirited horses, causing them to break out of the train and run, when instantly the dog jumped upon one of the mules and bit him severely, and adding much more to their fright. The wagon was loaded to the top of the bows, on the top of which sat the driver who reined the horses and mules for some time until a line broke, when they turned down a steep gully, turning the wagon completely over, and burying the driver under the load, the leaders (horses) broke clear from the mules, and the latter turned over and came upon their feet, the reverse from their original position, the high one being on the off side, and the off one on the high side. The horses ran in one direction, whilst the mules ran in another, with the forward wheels attached to them, and the dog with another belonging to the train chasing them. The horses were soon caught by Litwiler, who sprang upon one of our horses and gave chase, but the mules were not caught until the dogs were shot, although frequently surrounded by the men, they being so frightened that they would have ran directly over them. We got the driver out from under the goods as soon as possible, found him badly bruised and cut up, and bleeding freely, but sensible, which was more than we expected, as we thought we should find him killed outright. The wagon was completely broken to pieces, and they were compelled to encamp the train to repair the damage and to take care of the injured man. I never saw him afterwards, and have never heard whether he recovered; it is possible that he did, yet as they had two doctors in the train it is uncertain. The train belonged to Hennepin, Ill., and the same unlucky dog I was told had killed a mule for the train once before since they started.

We reached the Little Blue river about noon. The Little Blue is about 30 feet wide, and about 3 deep, good banks and sandy bottom; the water is good, and flows in a quick current. It is skirted with cotton wood tress, with some oak and ash the whole length of it. The timber generally lies on the west bank of the river, and averages from 20 to 100 rods in width. It furnishes good camping grounds all along its bottoms.

One of the men killed an antelope this evening which was divided up amongst the different messes in the train. 25 miles.

18th. Saturday. We saw some Pawnees to-day, for the first time—four came to the road to trade—about 20 more were hid in a gully a short distance from us, who were seen by some of our men, although they tried hard enough to secrete themselves. They are a treacherous, ill-looking set, and I did not like the looks of them much. They have too much of the cat look in their eyes, and when I see that in an Indian, I always

look out for treachery. We saw some buffalo to-day—one was killed last night a short distance above our camp. We camped this night on the Little Blue, where we found plenty of grass. Litwiler and Ranahan killed two antelope this evening, which furnished our camp with fresh meat again. We found plenty of signs of beaver this night, our sentries hearing them splashing their tails in the water nearly all night; on the banks of the river were trees one foot in diameter cut down by them.

22 miles.

19. Sunday. We concluded to travel to-day. Left the Blue for the last time about noon. A man had three horses and \$500 stolen last night by his own guard, who left him with his wife and two other women without a team. We took in water at the last place that we struck the Blue river, having 21 miles to travel without good water. Met a train coming from Robadeau's trading post, with five wagon loads of buffalo skins and other peltries. We stopped and wrote letters and sent back to the States by them, for which we paid them 25 cents for each letter. Robadeau himself was along, riding in a nice covered carriage, smoking his pipe, enjoying all the comfort imaginable.

25 miles.

20th. We camped last night on the prairie without wood or water, only some rotten slough water, bad enough to poison a horse. We had a wind storm, with heavy thunder, just at night, but no rain. It came upon us instantly without warning, and before we could secure our tents they were all blown down but two, which were protected by, and secured to the wagons. It was terrific, raising loaded wagons on the side next to the wind, two feet from the ground; we expected they would be blown over, and nothing saved them from being overturned but their loads, for if they had not been loaded they would have been swept away before the wind like feathers. Some of the time it was impossible for a man to keep his feet. I never saw such a storm of wind in the States, and hope I may not see another on this journey. We drove 26 miles and camped on an island in the Platte, or Nebraska river, about two miles below Fort Kearney, where we found plenty of grass and fuel. Saw some antelope, deer and buffalo to-day, but did not try to kill any.

26 miles.

21st. Remained over to repair damages, and to cut our wagon boxes off and make them shorter. Had some rain in the morning. A report is current here this morning that a train was cut off by the Indians on Sunday night, (where we baited Sunday noon.) A company of dragoons have left the Fort to-day to investigate the matter. Fort Kearney is considerable of a fort, built of adobies or unburnt brick. It is built in the form of a parallelogram, the centre forming a square which is defended by a park of artillery. The garrison consists of about 250 soldiers, who seem to be under excellent discipline. The commander's name I did not learn. The whole affair seems to be well calculated to keep the Indians in check, but I think would be of very little account in repelling an attack made by scientific troops, supported with good artillery.

22d. Started again this morning, traveled 22 miles up the Platte river. Our road lay along the Platte bottom, and was very good, but somewhat slippery from the rain that fell day before yesterday. The Platte bottom on this side of the river, is from 10 to 15 miles wide, being terminated on the side opposite from the river by high sand hills or bluffs.

The river itself is about two miles wide, with a swift current, but filled up with innumerable islands and sand bars. 22 miles.

23d. Our road still leads up the Platte bottoms. The land is very good, and we find some grass, best where there is no wood, except some willows and cotton wood on the islands in the river. We saw some antelope and buffalo to-day, but they were back on the bluffs, and our men thought too much of their spare horses to follow them. 25 miles.

24th. Continue still up the Platte bottom. We found some excellent springs of cool water, which were a treat to us, as we have had a very hot day, and our water has all along been muddy river water. We were compelled to use buffalo chips to-day for fuel, there being no wood. I suppose many of my lady readers would rather turn up their noses at a hoe cake baked on buffalo chips, but I assure them I saw ladies, who were genteel, that seemed to eat cakes baked with this fuel with great apparent relish. The buffalo chips used are droppings of buffalo the year previous. They become entirely dry, and make very good fuel, and are the main dependance for cooking for the next 300 miles, and until we get into the sage country. One of our men waded the Platte river to-day while we were baiting. The water was about three feet deep, except on the sand bars, where it was often not over six inches deep. The width of the river is about one mile. We began to find alkali on the surface of the ground to-day. In some places it was half an inch in depth, and tastes like air slacked saleratus. We found but little grass on this day's travel, but a very good, level road, and saw some antelope. 25 miles.

25th. Weather still hot, with cold nights. The wind changes about midnight, and blows cold from the west until noon of the next day, in the afternoon it dies away, leaving the atmosphere hot and sultry. The wind suddenly changed this evening, and blew a perfect tornado. It would have made a parson splithis sides with laughter if he could have refrained from holding the hair on his own head long enough to laugh—to have seen the the perfect confusion and turmoil which our camp was thrown into when it struck us. Tents were flying in the air, men chasing their hats, with the most persevering energy; some were holding down their tents to keep them from tumbling down, while others were tumbling them down to keep them from being torn into ribbons, and others in the greatest excitement were securing the covers of their wagons to prevent their being blown away; in truth it was one of the most delightful scenes of confusion, turmoil and dismay that could be imagined. For our part, we had noticed the coming change a few moments before it came about, and had secured our tent to our wagon, so that it weathered the gale; ours and one other were the only ones in the camp that remained standing when the blow passed over. The tornado lasted about thirty minutes, but during that time it leveled every tent in every encampment in sight of us, (but the two in our camp.) This is the second time we have had such a blow out, but we expect to find more of them before we get through. The grass is poor to-day, and no wood except willows on the islands and buffalo chips, of the latter of which there are a great plenty. 28 miles.

26th. Sunday. A part of our train concluded to lie over to-day, but the majority being against it, produced a split in the train, owing to which 10 wagons left us and drove on, leaving seven wagons behind. This we

consider no detriment, although the men belonging to those wagons that left us are all of them whole-hearted, noble-souled companions. Small trains travel faster than larger ones, and the difficulty of finding good camping grounds for a small train is not so great as for a large one. We were sorry to part with them, but we parted in friendship and peace, as all ought to do on this journey. Some of them wish to travel to Fort Laramie, which is 330 miles from Fort Kearney, before stopping, but we wish to rest our horses 'one day in every seven, and are determined whenever we can find grass to make that day the Sabbath. We are all very busy keeping the Sabbath, which is done here after this fashion: Exercises of the morning, shaving and cleaning with a plunge bath in the Platte river. Forenoon, setting wagon tire, repairing wagons. Afternoon, shoeing horses, washing clothes' &c. &c. Evening, rest—which is all the time we get to rest. Our stopping days are no resting days to us, but our horses need it—they look well now, and we mean to keep them looking well if we can. We have three blacksmiths in our train, and one wagon maker. We set the tire on Ainsly's wagon this morning in a manner that would be new to blacksmiths in the States. Not having any means of welding tire, we took them off from the wheels, took all the felloes off, and then put leather cottrells or rings on the spokes, thereby raising the shoulder of the spoke and enlarging the circle of the wheel, then put the felloes on again, and then heated the tire, and set it as tight as the best blacksmith could do, with a forge and bellows to cut and weld the ties at. This valley is lined with buffalo bones and carcasses, their skulls lie about in every direction. One of our men found 18 yesterday in one spot at the foot of a high bluff. They were probably driven over the bluff by the Indians. We saw no buffalo to-day, although there were plenty of signs, they appear to come down to the river at night to get water, and go back to the plains in the morning. The bottom is about two miles wide here, and on the bluffs may be found some few scattering cedars. Litwiler killed a noble buck to-day. Its horns were in the velvet, and the meat good. It made us plenty of meat for the whole company, and some to spare. Saw a beaver dam at this place.

27th. We struck our tents again this morning and started. We have had a very cold day, so much so that we needed great coats and mittens, and I have suffered more with cold than on any day since I started. We had a smart shower in the morning, which was welcome. The country on this day's drive looks like a huge buffalo pasture, the ground being covered with buffalo chips like a farm-yard. The emigrants before us have been slaughtering them without mercy. We counted eight fresh slaughtered ones within one mile distance. We were informed to-day that McPike & Strother's train lost 25 mules and horses in a stampede last night. We crossed the south fork of the Platte this afternoon. It is about three fourths of a mile wide here, which is the south or lower ford, but we had to travel in the river at least a mile and a half, the wind and current sweeping us down the river, so that our course lay in the form of a half circle. The water was about up to our wagon boxes, one of them taking water a little. This crossing is one of the exciting scenes of this journey. When we crossed, the river was filled with wagons, men, mules and horses, extending quite across the river. One of our waogns got stuck in the quick

sand which frightened the horses, but frightened the driver more. Being on horse back myself, I rode back to assist the driver, but in our endeavors to start the wagon we had our doubletree broken, owing to which accident I had to go ashore and send back a spare team to help them out, but before the team reached the wagon, and within a few minutes after I had reached the shore, the driver came ashore, bearing in hand a tin lantern, that being (in his fright) the only thing which he could find of value, to save out of the drowned wagon, which, as he supposed, would be soon buried in the quick-sand. However, after awhile, the wagon came safely ashore, when the driver had the satisfaction of depositing his tin lantern in a place of safety again in one of the boxes in the wagon. He did not relish much being said after that about crossing the Platte, it was a disagreeable subject, decidedly. Some of the teams were towed through the river with long ropes, with 20 or 30 men dragging at them ahead of the mules and horses, up to their middles in the water. One man was riding horseback when his horse stumbled off from a sand bar into deep water, and horse and rider both went out of sight; a dozen of us started immediately for him, but before we had got to him, horse and rider both came up, the horse making for the shore, and the man for the nearest sand bar.—The man lost his rifle and hat, which grieved him a great deal; the horse lost his rider, which he did not seem to take to heart at all. We drove about two miles after crossing and camped on the bottom, with no fuel but buffalo chips. A stampede took place about sunset, of 150 head of horses, mules and oxen, which was the largest stampede that we have seen or heard of. We were just cooking our supper. Our horses were quietly grazing around the camp; the men gathering buffalo chips for the night, or idly lounging about the fires, talking and smoking, and taking as much comfort as possible after our hard day's work, when down the river came a sound, as of distant thunder, yet more terrible to the ears of the practiced emigrant on the plains; instantly every man was on his feet listening to the approaching sounds; faintly above the noise could be heard the cry of stampede! stampede! and a dark mass enveloped in the dust could be seen moving down upon us with the speed of the wind. Instantly every man sprang for the horses, knowing too well that if they were not got inside of the correll of wagons, before that moving mass of terror and phrenzy came up to them they were lost. The cooks threw down their frying pans, the men their pipes, and bags of buffalo chips, and the whole plain looked more like bedlam broke loose than a quiet camping ground; some shouted and belabored the poor beasts, who already began to feel the infection, others lugged away at the long lariets of their mules who dogged and sullen, threw themselves on their reserved rights, and braced back on all fours with their long ears turned back and their eyes half closed, seemed to say to the unhappy knights who were so energetically tugging them along, no you don't—you can't come it, if you do, just let us know, but in they had to go, in spite of their resolution and firmness. During this time, which occupied less space than I have been in recording it, the infuriated mass kept rushing down towards us, sweeping everything of stock kind along with them that came in their way. The matter began to look serious for us, although we had succeeded in getting all of our stock within the circle of our wagons, when suddenly, when within a quar-

ter of a mile of us they took a turn and went dashing over the hills like a torrent, and a few minutes after them went 30 or 40 men on horses which they had secured, riding madly on to keep in sight of the terrified animals; on went the mass, and on went the riders, over hill and gully through the darkness of night in their "break-neck" career, until they came to the North Fork of the Platte, when fortune favored the riders, for the stampede took down the river towards the forks of the two rivers. Excitement reigned through every camp that night. Many had lost all their stock, their sole dependence for the prosecution of their journey, or even their safe return to the States. Families, men, women and children thrown out in the wilderness hundreds of miles from civilized beings, and their main hope gone. Would those in pursuit recover the horses? or would they dash on over those boundless plains in the frenzy of fear, growing more frantic as they proceeded, as many had before them, until nature could stand no more, and then drop dead in their tracks? These questions were often asked, and many were the tearful eyes that night that sought without avail rest and sleep. All night long the darkness was rendered hideous by the blowing of horns, firing of guns, and the shouting of men to warn, if perchance any straggler from the pursuing party should be on his return, of the whereabouts of the camp, and few were the eyes in those camps through which the stampede had taken its course that closed in sleep that night. The stampede continued down the river until it was stopped by the two rivers coming together, which once having checked their mad career, they were soon surrounded by the pursuers and safely secured, with the exception of one horse, which had broken his neck. Reader, if you wish to realize all the anxiety and horror of a stampede, go out in the plains hundreds of miles from help, where your horses are as necessary to your safety as the ship is to the sailor at sea. See a moving body of stock coming down towards your horses, snorting, neighing, bellowing and braying, enveloped in a perfect cloud of dust, making the earth tremble under their feet: witness the distended nostril, the glistening eye, and the fierce snort and neigh of your own horse as you cling to him for dear life, and as he kicks and plunges as the stampede approaches, and the madness grows upon him to break from you and join them in their mad career—go out and see and feel all these things, when perhaps your life hangs upon the result, and then you may have some idea of a stampede; but otherwise you cannot. 20 miles.

28th. We traveled up the south Fork about eight miles, when we left the river and crossed the dividing ridge between the two forks to the north branch of the Platte. The country is barren and sandy, with no grass. We saw several antelope, and had one or two good chases for them, but did not get any. 22 miles.

29th. We were compelled to ascend the bluffs to-day and travel 15 miles without water. Three buffalo came running towards our train to-day, and threatened to run through the train, but turned their course when within about 20 rods of us. Col. Sublet shot two bullets through one of them from his double shooter but did not bring him down. Litwiller afterwards killed a bull. We stopped four hours after we got to the river to get in the meat. It was excellent, with the exception of having a strong flavor of musk. It will supply our whole train for a week,

besides leaving enough for 40 men. We have found great quantities of wagons, irons, chains and other property thrown away, on the road to-day. Abundance of buffalo, antelope and wolves are seen now. 24 miles.

30th. We got an early start this morning, and reached Ash Hollow about noon, where we found some trees growing, which were welcome to our sight. The road from the upper ford on the South Fork, comes in at Ash Hollow. Camped early and found plenty of grass, with thousands of horses cattle and mules feeding upon it. An old Frenchman with a party of Yanktaw Indians, is camped near us, trading with the emigrants. We have passed several good springs of water to-day. The Bluffs here are mostly limestone, with a few cedar trees growing upon them; back of this they have been mostly sand bluffs. We find alkali every day now. 22 miles.

31st. We had a heavy shower last night, a perfect deluge, but it was needed, for the country was very dry. We have passed several Indian villages to-day, belonging to the Yanktaw Sioux. One village had about forty lodges in it. The Sioux are a noble race and very friendly, and appear to be as much civilized as their neighbors near the settlement, that is they know how to beg to perfection. They lately had a fight with the Pawnees, in which they were victorious, and took a great many ponies, which are now feeding around the wigwams. One of them came in with a pony loaded with buffalo meat while I was in their wigwam. I saw some Indian burials, to-day. They bury on a platform raised from the ground, on poles about eight feet high. The poles are set up in the form of a pyramid, and are fastened together at the top, where also is hung the medicine bag of the chief. The body is wrapped in buffalo robes, and a cloth made of bark, enclosing also a quantity of buffalo meat, and other provisions to last him on his journey to the spirit land, and his arrows to shoot with on the way. When all the preparation is complete, the body is laid upon the platform, to moulder or dry up as may be, in the sun, until the robes get off when the ravens may finish it. This one that I went to see to-day, smelt so bad that I could not approach very near to it without holding my nose, and then it was very offensive. It was a chief who had been killed in the recent fight with the Pawnees.

June 1st. We had more rain last night. Passed several springs to-day, and saw some scattering trees on the bluffs. We now find great quantities of lizards; they are small, being about three inches long, and very sprightly and active little things, and the boys have much fun in chasing them. We passed some more Sioux and Chienns wigwams to-day; or as the indians themselves pronounce it, Link. We had a heavy wind-squall in the afternoon, with some rain. Country still barren, with but little grass. We camped at night in sight of the famous Chimney Rock; this rock is quite a curiosity. It is composed of soft sand stone. It is about one hundred and twenty paces around it at the base, and about as high as Bunker's Hill monument, and looks very much like it at a distance. It can be seen at a distance of thirty or forty miles. We travelled one day and a half after we came in sight of it, before we came opposite to it. It is said by the French traders to have been much higher than at present, but is wearing away every year by the action of the elements. The Court House and county buildings are also in sight from our camping ground to-night. They are a group of sandstone bluffs, resembling the objects

which they are named from, and are curiosities worth seeing. They are about twenty miles from us, perhaps more, but they look as if they were not three miles distant. All distances here are deceptive, the eye readily taking in objects at a distance of twenty or thirty miles, the atmosphere being so clear. 25 miles.

2d. Sunday. Laid over to-day, to air our loads and rest our teams.— All the wagons but Litwilers and mess left us to-day, being anxious to get along. We shall probably overtake them at St. Laring, which is about ninety miles from this place. The weather is pleasant and warm with a fair chance for grass. Fuller and J. Ingalls undertook to go to Court House Rock this afternoon, which looks to be but a few miles from us, but after traveling about twelve miles they thought it looked quite as far as when they started, and they turned back; they got into the camp about eleven o'clock at night.

3d. Drove twenty-five miles, and passed the Chimney Rock. We camped about two miles back from the river on the bottom, and about four miles from a large bluff resembling the fortification which we named Fort Whitey, from its white appearance. Several of the boys went out on a wild goose chase to the bluffs for wood, there being a few straggling cedars in sight which appeared to be not over two miles distant; they started about four P. M. and got back at ten o'clock at night pretty well fatigued, with no fuel, being unable to reach the cedars. 25 miles.

4th. Had a heavy rain last night, and got a late start, but drove thirty miles and caught up with the rest of our company who left us on Sunday. We passed Robadove's trading post, at Scott's bluffs and camped about two miles from it at a spring of clear cold water gushing out of a rock.— This ought to be called the Rock of Horeb, situated as it is in a desert land. Our road to-day led back from the river, and we have had a scarcity of water for our horses.

We have had a dry, hot day, with great scarcity of grass. The country is getting more barren. Found an indifferent camping ground. 25 miles.

6th. Passed another French trading post to-day with its usual accompaniment of Indian wigwams. Litwiler swapped horses with an old Indian who took a fancy to his horse because it was white, and his squaw wanted it, he said. We reached Fort Laramie about four o'clock, P. M.; forded the Laramie river, and camped about two miles from the fort on the bluff, the authorities at the Fort prohibiting emigrants from camping in the valley. 26 miles.

7th. Remained this day at the camping ground to write home, there being a post office at the Fort. There are a great many wagons left at this point by many taking to packing. Thousands of dollars worth of property being thrown away, but anything we wish to buy, we have to pay double price for. Fort Laramie is situated at the junction of the Laramie and Platte rivers, and surrounded by high bluffs, being at the base of the Black Hills. It is 630 miles from St. Joseph, and 500 from Council Bluffs. The fort is built mostly of adobies, or unburnt brick, and resembles Fort Kearney. The garrison consists of about 300 men at this time.— The Council Bluffs road comes in at this place, and the soldiers have a ferry across the Platte by which they make considerable money out of the

emigrants, which I understand goes into a fund to buy a library for the garrison. The officers have built a hand saw-mill near the fort, although there is no timber nearer than the Black Hills, some 10 miles distant from the fort.

8th. Struck our tents this morning and started on the Black Hills road. The majority of the teams have gone up the Platte bottoms. We have found good grass to-day, abundance of good buffalo grass, the best we have had. Passed the Warm Spring, 14 miles from the fort; saw a flock of mountain sheep, but they were so wild that we could not get a shot at them. Saw an antelope—had a grand chase for him, but he eluded us and got away. We camped at night at a beautiful stream of water in a romantic valley, with plenty of wood and water. One of Loyd's men shot a sage hen, which is a species of grouse somewhat larger than a prairie hen. The flesh of the sage hen is excellent savory eating. We are now in the sage country; it resembles our cultivated sage, but is more bitter, and grows about two feet high; also great abundance of prickly pear, the ground being sometimes covered for acres in one bed. The prickly pear covers the ground here to that extent that we are frequently compelled to clear away with our spades space to erect our tents, it not being particularly agreeable to the seat of honor to sit down on the long sharp thorns. This must be a healthy country, although a barren cold one, being constantly in sight of snow, which can be seen at all times in the year. 26 miles.

9th. The road this morning led up the valley of the creek about six miles, then struck across to another creek eight miles; after leaving the creek we found a spring of good water; five miles from this spring we came to Horse Creek. Here were great numbers camped, being just seventeen miles to the next water, with but little grass on the route. The latter part of the day's drive has been rough and sandy. We passed two men on the creek making pack saddles. They had given away their wagons and thrown away their other property. Wagons, harness, stoves, and all kinds of property we find strewn along the road now. We had a tremendous hail storm this afternoon. The hail fell two inches deep, some of the pieces of which were an inch in diameter. Many who were exposed had their lips and cheeks cut through by the hail. The storm beat our tents down, and we had to crawl under the wagons for shelter from its fury. We got up our tents again after the storm passed over, but had to sleep in three inches depth of mud through the night. 20 miles.

10th. We were camped last night opposite Laramie's Peak, distant about 10 miles. We first saw the Peak at a distance of 70 miles. It is always covered with snow, which makes it a prominent object. We reached La Pointe Creek about noon. Have had a hilly road to-day and poor grass. 26 miles.

11th. Camped last night at the Red Stone Quarries. Here we found the most beautiful, pure specimens of white free stone. It was soft and could be cut readily with a knife. The real free stone is equally soft when it first comes out of the quarry. We have had muddy roads to-day, and a very barren country to travel through, with but little grass. Passed Pearl Creek, where we had another severe hail storm. Saw a fine horse that had been left behind to-day. His feet had become injured for want of shoes. 22 miles.

12th. We saw a good vein of coal to-day, about ten inches thick. It was on the bank of the Platte river, where the water had washed the bank away. I examined it, and found it of good quality. A camp near us lost twenty-six horses and one mule last night, by a stampede. We have heard to-day that they have found sixteen of the horses, and mule. Country barren, and grass poor. Passed the Deer Creek to-day, which is a beautiful stream, with cotton wood trees growing on its banks. Fuller and Ingalls caught a mess of small fish out of it. 22 miles.

13th. Reached the Upper Platte ferry about noon. We found four boats, two belonging to the Mormons, and two to a St. Louis company. The charge for crossing is four dollars per wagon, and 50 cents for a horse or mule. The celebrated Kit Carson is here with a drove of horses and mules for sale. I did not see him, he being out on the hills with stock.—The country is very barren here, the Black Hills reaching down within a few miles of the river, and covered with snow. Crossed the river and camped on a barren hill-side without grass, which was the best spot that we could find. 15 miles.

14th. To-day's drive has been over a desert bearing nothing but wild sage, and crickets which cover the ground, and seem to get as fat as it if they had something to eat. They were so numerous that we could not step without crushing some of them. Passed an alkali spring and pond 12 miles from the ferry; also the Willow Springs, 28 miles from the river. Found good water at the Willow Springs, but no grass. Camped on Prospect Hill in full view of the lofty snow capped Peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and have had a very cold, windy day's drive, with sandy road. 30 miles.

15th. Very cold day; have to wear our overcoats and mittens. Rained all night and forenoon, with a right smart chance of a snow storm. After the snow storm had blown out we had one of the most splendid views of the Rocky Mountains that the mind could conceive. They were clothed with pure white snow from base to summit, gigantic specimens of Nature's monuments. Passed some small creeks to-day furnishing some good water; also several alkali lakes and swamps. Thousands of wagon loads of pure saleratus and pearlsh could be got here. The crusting over some of the swamps readily supported a man walking upon it. We gathered some for use and found it much stronger than the manufactured article, but think it contains some poisonous property, as the bread made of it affected us disagreeably. I should advise all to observe caution in using it. Passed the Independence Rock, which is a huge mass of granite covered with the names of thousands who have gone before us. Crossed the Sweet Water river, which is about 10 rods wide, and three feet deep at the ford, and camped one mile from the crossing. 24 Miles.

Sunday. 16th. Moved our camp up to the foot of the mountain where we found a good spring of water and some grass. We are now fairly in the Rocky Mountains, and a ragged looking country it is. Huge piles of granite reared upon each other, covered with snow renders the prospect picturesque, but cheerless. Weather cold and windy.

17th. Passed the Devil's gate, a narrow chasm in the rock, said to be about four hundred feet deep, through which the Sweet Water runs. It resembles the dells on the Wisconsin River. Have had a sandy road and

poor grass. Bought a light wagon and harness this evening for 10 dollars. Saw several heavy wagons that had been left on the road, owing to the sand. 25 miles.

18th. Crossed the Sweet Water three times to-day. Got in with a train of ox wagons which hindered us so much that we turned out and camped at 3 o'clock, P. M. Found good grass at camp, but have had sandy roads and no grass on the drive. Left our heavy wagon, for the good of other comers, who will probably burn it. Ice made last night half an inch in thickness.

19th. Started at half past three o'clock this morning, and passed all the ox trains in their camp ground, the Sweet Water, four miles from camp, from which crossing we will have 16 miles to travel without water or grass. Saw several dead oxen along the 16 miles, which were killed by alkali.—Crossed the Sweet Water again—passed one tent on the river of a man and his wife, the man down with the mountain fever. Roads sandy and grass poor. We overtook the balance of our company, who left us last Sunday, again to-day. This is the second time they have left us, and we have overtaken them within three days afterwards, which shows pretty conclusively, I think, that nothing is gained by driving Sundays. 28 miles.

20th. Got up into the region of snow to-day, and have passed several snow banks alongside of the road in the ravines. Road better, but no grass to speak of. We passed the 10 wagons to-day which left us on the Platte because we would not drive on Sunday. They had had four days start of us at Ft. Laramie. When we passed them they had 14 men down with the mountain fever. Crossed a branch of the Sweet Water and the Willow Creek, and camped about a mile from the latter. We passed to-day a grave made yesterday of a man found with his throat cut. He had in his hand when found, a jack knife, and near him was found a scanty supply of provisions. He had committed suicide. It was evident that he was a foot packer, and had probably become depressed by his journey and the gloomy prospect of his not being able to get through his long journey with his slender supply of provisions. Poor fellow; he had become discouraged in prosecuting one long journey, and had entered upon another longer journey, with, perhaps, less preparation than upon the first. His name was not known. 20 miles.

21st. We lost our horses this morning, which hindered us some time, but we succeeded in finding them again. We crossed the Sweet Water for the last time; 10 miles from the crossing is the summit of the Rocky mountains at the South Pass, which we reached at noon. It is known by two conical shaped mounds or hills, about 60 feet high. No one would ever suspect this to be the summit, the country is so level, and the ascent of the whole distance is so gradual. Three miles from the summit we reached the Pacific Springs, one of the heads of the Colorado river of the Gulf of California. Camped at the springs over night, found plenty of grass, but the swamps are very miry. At this place the California Express mail stops to take letters back to the States for the emigrants.—The price of sending back a letter is 50 cents. The other 10 wagons came up to-night and camped with us. They have two more men down with the fever, making 16 in all. They intend going the Salt Lake route from here, but we shall go the Sublette cut-off. 17 miles.

22d. Left early this morning and reached the Big Sandy river at night. We had no water the first 25 miles excepting from one small brackish creek. Passed the forks of the Salt Lake and Sublett cut-off, roads 14 miles from the Springs. The right hand road, the Sublett cut-off, the left, Fort Bridges and Salt Lake. The road along this day's drive has shown plenty of the evil effects of want of grass, water, &c., in the numerous skeletons of stock left last year along the road. The country is barren deserts, destitute of grass, and covered with wild sage. We found plenty of grass towards the mountains about three miles from the river.— We have had a hot day, although the mountains, as far as we can see are covered with snow. 31 miles.

23d. Sunday. Remained on the Big Sandy to-day. Great numbers are camped here intending to cross the Big Sandy and Green River desert to-night. One of our company Thos. Trimble, was taken sick yesterday with mountain fever; by my advice he was brought along by his partner, Col. Sublett, who had intended to remain back with him. He is very much better to-day, which inclines me to think that it would be better in most cases to travel with the patient in that fever than to lie by. The Big Sandy is about 10 rods wide, and 18 inches deep at this time, and is a branch of the Colorado of the West.

24th. Started last night at five o'clock, P. M., to cross the desert, which is not so much a desert as a great deal of the country over which we have already traveled. It is destitute of water, but we found considerable grass. Arrived at the Green River about noon, having traveled all night, only stopping occasionally to rest our teams. The distance, as measured by a roadometer belonging to Dr. Reed's Pennsylvania train, was 41 miles, but I was told that a road turned off 25 miles from the Sandy which shortened the distance to Green River, to 30 miles. It was but little traveled, owing to which we missed it, being in the night when we passed it. Five miles from the river we had a bluff to descend which was 300 feet high, and almost perpendicular, but we got down without accident by locking both hind wheels and sliding. Last year the emigrants were obliged to take their wagons to pieces and let them down with ropes. We had a beautiful moonlight last night for traveling. Our road led in sight of the snow mantled peaks of the Rocky Mountains, which looked with the moon beaming upon them, like mountains of molten silver. It was one of the most magnificent views that I have ever witnessed, and richly repaid me for the loss of rest in crossing the desert in the night to attain it. We brought a packer across the desert in our wagon who was unable to travel on horse back, from sickness; he was so much better when we reached Green River that he concluded to try his horse again. Our company is peculiarly fortunate, for we not only escape sickness ourselves, but are often able to relieve others who are suffering. We crossed Green River in a ferry boat and drove seven miles, passing a creek six miles from the river, and camped for the night. Found the grass poor, but good water. We paid \$5 a wagon for crossing, and swam our stock. Green River is about 15 rods wide at the ferry, with a very swift current, and generally deep. Some few ford above the ferry, but it is attended with great danger. One wagon went rolling down the stream, while we were there. One horse belonging to it was drowned, but the men were saved by the

ferry boat. One went down yesterday in the same manner. I understand that 14 men have been drowned here this season in crossing. Flour is worth here \$50 per hundred lbs. Green River presents the most romantic scenery in the world; it is deep set in the midst of bluffs that take the shapes of towers, castles, cities, and of every imaginable work of art. The bottom is smooth at intervals, looking like a lawn with the stream, as viewed from the summit of the bluffs meandering through it, looking like a silver thread winding through a green landscape, while at a distance on one side may be seen the peaks of the Rocky Mountains covered with snow, from their bases to their summits, rearing their heads far into the sky, with the sun shining upon them causing them to glisten like burnished silver. On the other side are Green River mountains, which, though less lofty, are quite as picturesque, having their valleys relieved by groves of pine, the green contrasting agreeably with the naked brown rocks composing the mountains. It is out of my power to do the subject justice.—It would be a paradise for a landscape painter. When the railroad shall be built from the States to California or Oregon, it will undoubtedly become a fashionable resort in summer, and then its beauty will be known to the world. Green River rises in the Wind River mountains and empties into the Colorado 48 miles.

25th. Drove five miles to a considerable branch of Green River, and camped for the day. We here found the best grass that we have had since leaving St. Joseph. Drove our horses about one mile below the road and crossed to an island containing about 40 acres, covered with excellent grass. We have had a very hot day, as we have had every day since we left the Pacific Springs, but cold nights. 5 miles.

26th. Remain in camp to-day to recruit our horses. A man died about a mile above us to-day. He had the measles, when the mountain fever set in and carried him off. Some of the company went to the mouth of the creek this evening and caught a fine mess of salmon, one of which weighed seven lbs. They are an excellent kind of fish, and very well flavored, the cold ice water of the mountain rivers keeping them always hard. They are very abundant in Green River.

27th. Started again this morning early, traveled up the creek about three miles, then crossed the stream and struck across the ridges. Had a bad day for traveling on account of the dust which was suffocating.—Stopped to bait at some springs and thin groves at the foot of the Two Mile bluffs. We here found a few spruce trees. It is a great pleasure in these deserts to find trees, even if they are but dwarfs. We camped at night near a little brook at the foot of some high mountain. We have had high hills to ascend and descend to-day, with plenty of water but no grass until night, when we found good grass. 26 miles.

28th. We traveled above the snow region again to-day and had abundance of it all about. I climbed one snow bank 20 feet high, notwithstanding the heat in the middle of the day is so intense. We have had steep hills to ascend again to-day, but the worst of it is in descending them.—We crossed one considerable stream, name unknown. Fuller and Jonathan caught about 35 trout while we were lying about it. We have had plenty of Indians about us. They are Shoshonees or Snakes. Camped this night on Grove Hill, at the Bear Head encampment, on the summit between

Green River and Bear River. We are above snow yet, and have found a plenty of grass and water. 18 miles.

29th. We had some very bad hills to descend to-day. I understand that the emigrants of last year had to let their wagons down some of them with ropes. We got down with out accident, by locking our hind wheels. Reached Bear River about 3 P. M., and drove down the Four Branches or Smith's River, and camped. At this point the Four Branches enter the Bear River between two high points or curves of the mountains, and within one hundred rods from the first to the last. One of them is very deep and bad to cross; the water coming nearly to the top of the wagon bed. Bear River is a large stream about 150 yards across, with a deep swift current, and runs almost directly towards the north at this place. Its bottoms furnish an abundance of luxuriant nutritious grass, enough to supply all the stock on the plains, and they resemble the bottoms on the rivers of Illinois. We find plenty of Indians on this river, it being the head quarters of the Shoshonees whose lodges may be seen on the opposite side of the river. They have an abundance of Rocky Mountain horses, and are learning to talk English very fast; have learned to beg right smart, as our Missouri friends say, but dog on 'em, if they can't beg, they will steal. They are a little better looking indians than the Crows, but I think much more indolent and filthy. 18 miles.

30th. Sunday. We remain in camp to-day, having good grass and water. Some of the boys are fishing trout and have caught several. This is a beautiful, romantic spot, surrounded by high steep mountains, forming a basin three or four miles in extent, well supplied with grass. We have had some Indian visitors here to-day; one of them swam Bear River and came up to the camp, as naked as father Adam before he eat the forbidden fruit. He was an old fellow, and as full of his jokes as if he could talk English. His nakedness however did not seem to trouble him, as I suppose that according to his notions of propriety, "That nature unadorned, the most adorned;" and it is no unusual thing to see the Indian women in the same state of nature's ornament as father Adam's helpmeet was at the time before mentioned.

A train passed to-day, who called upon us for assistance in crossing the Four Forks, for reason that every man in the train was sick but one. We helped them to cross, when they went their way. Dr. Reed's Pennsylvania train camped here last night. They moved on this morning with the intention of getting up a celebration of our National Anniversary on the Fourth of July. We have traveled occasionally with them since striking the Little Blue, often camping with them, so much so that we seem to feel like old friends.

July 1st. Struck our tents this morning and crosed the Four Forks.— Had bad crossing the second Fork, the water being over the top of the wagon box. After crossing, we had to go over one of the worst roads around the mountain I ever saw, sometimes raising our wheels up perpendicular rocks three feet high, sometimes jumping off similar ledges.— We broke the bolster to our wagon—others experienced other injury.— Some in advance of us had been still more unfortunate, as the wrecks of wagons along the road plainly proved. We drove about 12 miles and bai-

ted by another fine stream, where we found plenty of grass, and caught a fine mess of trout.

This afternoon we had some tremendous hills to climb and descend, with a very rough road, over combs of rock, but at night we found ourselves past them, and on Bear River again, where we camped. We have found an abundance of grass and water to-day, and have had rather a pleasant time, although climbing some of the hills was sufficiently tiresome, though not as tiresome as the descent.

25 miles.

2d. Had a good road with plenty of water and grass. The road left the river to-day, following up a wide valley, in which we camped for the night. We passed an Indian village this afternoon, with a grocery and a black smith's shop. The forge was an army forge, belonging to the Government. Porter swapped one of his horses that had got beaten out, with an Indian, and got the wickedest little witch of a pony that I ever saw. It had never been rode with anything but a lariat. The boys had great sport this evening in trying to harness her, which they succeeded in doing after a long fight with her.

22 miles.

3d. We had an excellent road with an abundance of water and grass. I say nothing about wood for the last thousand miles, for the reason that we have had to do the best we could for fuel by using buffalo chips, (Boise baches) and sage bush. We passed the Soda Springs this afternoon and camped on the Bear River for the last time, and where the Fort Hall road leaves the river, and about four miles from the Springs. The Springs are situated at the point where the Bear River commences to turn towards the south. They will undoubtedly, when the great railroad shall have been constructed to the Pacific, become a great watering place for the world.—It is a beautiful location. The majestic Bear River flowing along—the snowy peaks of the Utah mountains stretching away to the south as far as the eye can reach, while to the north can be seen the lower ranges of the Rocky Mountains, green to their tops with vegetation. The Springs arise on the bank of the river on a small plain covered with cedars through which runs a clear branch of the Bear River. To the west may be seen the bed of the old volcanoes, now a barren plain, covered with wild sage, and dangerous to travel, on account of the numerous chasms of unknown depths, opening their yawning mouths on its surface. Probably there are no greater curiosities in the world than the Soda Springs. The water from several of these springs is equal to the best soda. We tried it with acid and produced a most pleasant beverage. One of them called the Steamboat Spring, is a great curiosity of itself. It has a cone shaped shaft or spout, the cavity of which may be six or eight inches in diameter. The water rises and recedes in this shaft every few minutes, with a noise like letting off steam on a steamboat, hence its name. There are also Sulphur Springs, and springs containing other minerals, and five miles back in the hills is a Sulphur Lake. We have had a pleasant summer day to-day, although the mountain-tops are covered with snow. We have had a light shower this afternoon, for the first time since we crossed the Rocky Mountains. We found an Indian village at the Soda Springs, with one or two Frenchmen. They were Shoshonees or Snakes, and very intelligent looking Indians.

25 miles.

4th. Not having overtaken Reed's train, to celebrate with them, we

concluded to travel to-day. The Fort Hall road here bears to the right, which is also the Oregon route; the Soda Springs cut-off route keeps directly across the old crater. We concluded to go the latter route. About 10 miles travel took us over the crater, and six miles more over the hills to a branch of the Lewis or Snake River, a branch of the Columbia River, where we found another Indian village, with some Mexicans, and about three hundred of the most beautiful Rocky Mountain horses. We passed the village and stopped to bait on the side of the hill, where we found good spring of water. We here had a pail full of punch made, cooled with a lump of snow from a deep snow bank a few rods from our camp, to celebrate our National Anniversary. Having drank our punch, and given three cheers for our glorious Union, we resumed our march. Soon after starting we came to where we had to descend a very bad hill, where we found one company with their wagon broken down, who were about to take to packing. Soon afterwards we came to another considerable stream which we traveled down a few miles and camped. We found plenty of grass on the stream and caught some fine trout.

25 miles.

5th Passed several streams to-day, and some good springs. Roads good but somewhat hilly; plenty of grass; passed a brook about night, camped on a hill side by a spring of water. This is the most beautiful country that I ever traveled in; stupendous mountains, the bald peaks covered with snow, rearing their lofty heads far into the skies. The lesser hills green to their tops, and the valleys rich with vegetation, wild wheat, clover and oats, whilst the clear, pure, invigorating atmosphere renders it the paradise of the mountaineer in summer. It is well worth a trip to California for the slothful, ease-loving denizen of lower countries, to see the country, and recover their manhood.

23 miles.

6th. Drove about 11 miles and stopped to bait at a pretty little brook. We should have taken in water at this place, as we had to drive 18 miles to get water again. After baiting we entered a canon (kanyon) which we followed about eight miles to the top of a mountain. It furnished us with an excellent road, although so narrow that but one wagon could pass for most of the way, the walls rising on either side hundreds of feet. The ascent is gradual, so much so that the traveler hardly perceives any. We called this the Emigrant's Pass. It seems as if nature constructed this inclined plain expressly for the benefit of us poor mortals, but if dame Nature was moved by any such kindly feelings towards us when she was engaged on this excellent natural road, she must have got sadly miffed when she got it completed to the top of the mountain, for we had one of the most tremendous descents to make on the other side, that we have had on the journey. The descent was probably one thousand feet within the first mile, steeper than the roof of a house. It is said of an ancient Spartan, that he commenced by lifting a kid, and by continuing to add weight, soon got so that he could lift an ox. This is somewhat the case with us; when we commenced the journey, trifling hills were considered great obstacles, but now we lock our hind wheels and slide down a thousand feet, over rocks, and through gullies, with as much sang froid as a school boy would slide down a snow bank. After descending, we traveled down a

valley a few miles and turned up to the foot of the mountains, and just after dark found water. 29 miles.

7th. Sunday. We concluded to lie over to-day, although we have not so good a camping ground as we could desire. One of our company, Loyd, of Mineral Point, Wis., had a horse stolen, or strayed last night. Another company, camped about eight miles from us, had three stolen by the Indians.

8th. Got an early start this morning. Passed another spring eight miles from where we camped last night. Met six men going back after the three horses that were stolen. They had recovered one, which the Indians had sold to an ox train. Passed some men digging a grave, to deposit the last remains of one who had traveled a long road to obtain a narrow home.

This afternoon, we entered another canon, similar to the Emigrant's Pass, only that instead of having a steep hill to descend, it reached quite through the mountain. The distance through, is about fifteen miles, and has several fine springs of water in it. Saw some goodly sized trees, either spruce or fir; camped at night in the canon on a spring branch which makes out on the west side of the mountain. Found good grass all day; passed over a valley covered with wild wheat, as high as my shoulders. It was headed out, and looked like a cultivated wheat field. 25 miles.

9th. Traveled down the Spring branch about six miles, when we crossed it, and traveled fourteen miles over a barren, burning sage plain, without water—to Raft river, which is the nastiest stream that we have had to cross, since leaving the Missouri. Deep, narrow and muddy, we had to pack all of our load across it, on our backs. One wagon that crossed whilst we were there, tipped end-wise over the forward wheels, as it entered the stream, throwing the two men who were in it, into the water, frightening them awfully. They caught hold of their mules' tails, and were drawn out; the king bolt of the wagon preventing its coming down upon them. We had four more, smaller streams to cross, within two miles of the Raft river, equally muddy; at one of which, we broke our hindmost evener, leaving our wagon in the water, and getting our load wet. After getting out of the scrape, we drove four miles, and crossing another branch of the Raft river, camped for the night, at the junction of the Cut-Off and Ft. Hall roads.

We are now at the end of the Soda Springs cut-off. I like this route much, with the exception of descending two bad hills; it is a good route, along which may be found abundance of grass and water, the two great desideratums on this long journey. It is somewhat infested with Indians, excepting the first 45 miles; they are the Shemook or Root Digger Indians, a thievish, rascally race. It is well for the emigrant to keep good guard over his stock on this cut-off, for they are always on the watch for an opportunity to steal. We have good grass and water to-night, and an abundance of it. 25 miles.

10th. Left our camping ground early and travelled up the creek about five miles, then crossed and passed over another dividing ridge to another small creek—came in sight of the Great Salt Lake road. Had plenty of grass and water—camped at night on a small brook in a basin in the mountains, surrounded by high granite peaks standing about in the greatest

confusion, called the Steeple Rocks. They are quite a curiosity at a distance, looking like steeples rising up from the plains, some of them many hundred feet high, and covering more than an acre or two at the base.—
The road has been good. 25 miles.

11th. Got an early start this morning. We had a very cold night, quite cold enough for December, but have had a very warm day.— Passed the Junction of the Salt Lake and Ft. Hall roads this morning;— saw some wagons coming that road, the men said they had been seven days coming from Salt Lake; that it was about 170 miles, and that they had some bad streams to cross, one of them (the Webber) 19 times.— Passed a new grave at noon. We saw the team to which the person belonged who died, go along while we were baiting; he was then alive;— when we came up two hours afterwards, he was buried. He was from Missouri, and had been left sick on the road by his comrades. The team that had him in charge had picked him up and brought him along over 1000 miles and attended him until he died. Humanity sickens at such selfishness as that manifested by his comrades. They were three in number—he owned one fourth of the craft in common with them, but becoming sick, the brutes left him to the mercy of Indians, wolves, or such strangers as chance might throw in his way. The scoundrels should serve 10 years in the penitentiary if they ever get back to Missouri. We find many sick on the road now, and some deaths, but three-fourths of all that are sick are from Missouri. I do not know why it is, but such appears to be the fact.

This afternoon we had a long bad hill to descend, when we reached Goose Creek, and traveled up a few miles and camped for the night.— We have had an abundance of grass and water to-day. A singular looking gigantic bluff of rocks lies directly opposite from us, which we call the castle, and it looks like an ancient castle, with its mossy battlements and sturdy towers. I saw some of the most beautiful specimens of white marble to-day that it has been my fortune to examine. There was a quarry of it filling a mountain. It was as pure as alabaster, and probably has not a rival in the world. Horse shoe nails sold to-day for 25 cents a piece. 25 miles.

12th. Followed up the Goose creek 13 miles, then up a spring branch thro' a gorge in the mountains and across some barren ridges without water, about 12 miles, when we entered the Thousand Spring Valley. The ridge that we crossed is composed almost entirely of lava, or melted stone, and is very rough and sharp to travel over. We did not camp until after dark, their being no grass at the first springs, and then we camped in the wild sage without grass, but we could go no farther that night. Fourteen horses ran away whilst we were getting our supplies. Some of them were found during the night, and the rest in the morning; they had found good grass up in the hills. Most of our men were out all night, so that this night seems but a continuation for the morrow. 30 miles.

13th. Crossed the ridge from the Thousand Spring Valley to the Cold Creek Valley about 12 miles, no grass or water. Cold Creek is a dry creek where we struck it, but furnishes some water for stock. Our course lay up the creek, which we followed up to near its head, where we camped at some good springs impregnated with sulphur. We found plenty of grass

at night, and have seen considerable quantities of alkali through the day. We passed the grave of a man drowned July 1st, [1850] but cannot imagine where it happened, as there is not water enough in the creek to drown a man, if he should lie down expressly for that purpose. The dust has been very oppressive to-day. 23 miles.

14th. Sunday. Laid over to-day. Weather very warm, but cold last night. Jonathan killed a sage hen to-day; we found it good, delicate flavored meat, much better than prairie hen. A packer had a horse shot last night with an arrow about 10 miles below us; another man lost two horses and four oxen which were stolen by the Indians.

15th. Got an early start this morning, traveled about four miles and came to the hot springs. They are curiosities worth visiting. They boil up like water in a kettle, and are hot enough to cook eggs. I attempted to put my hand into one of them to the wrist, but could not get it in to the knuckles without scalding. An amusing story is told of some Dutchmen who came to it, and stopped their teams by its side, when one of them went to the spring, and seeing it boiling up clear and limpid, threw himself down on the ground and thrust his face into the water, but instantly sprang to his feet with his eyes staring, and brushing the hot water from his face with both hands, he screamed out, "Trive on, Honce, trive on; hell ish no more dan five milsh from here!" The springs smell strong of sulphur, and discharge a large quantity of water. Near them are some good cold springs. Four miles from these springs we left the Mormon trace which leads over to Canyon Creek, and passed through a valley to a branch of the Humbolt River. Road good but dusty, not much grass. At the point where we left the Mormon trace, we found an excellent spring of pure cold water, as cold as ice water. We passed a natural well near the place where we struck a branch of the Humboldt, and camped two miles below at some sulphur springs, strongly impregnated with alkali. This well has no soundings that have ever been reached, there are also some of the same in Thousand Spring Valley. The whole country hereabouts has been at some day past a great volcanic crater, and its distinctive features at this day will remind one of that place spoken of above by the honest Dutchman, rather than pertaining to earth. We have passed springs gushing out of the rocks to-day so poisonous that a wine glass full would kill a man as soon as so much arsenic. They can be told by the smell for 40 rods before reaching them. We found good grass to-night, although there was considerable alkali mixed with it.

33 miles.

16. About 10 miles drive brought us to the Humboldt, which is about 20 yards wide and three feet deep. We crossed it and followed down it on its west bank. The valley here is wide and filled with abundance of excellent grass, clover, wild oats, wheat and red top. The day has been very hot and dusty, yet on both sides of us, but a few miles distant, the tops of the mountains are covered with snow. We passed two new graves to-day; one of them was of a man who was shot by an Indian whilst on guard on the night of the 2d of July, and died on the fifth. His name was Oliver; he was from Waukesha, Wis. The Indians are rather troublesome of late, as the Diggers always are when they dare to be. We find a great many dead horses now, and some that are left alive, the ef-

fects of hard driving and alkali. The most of the dead, stock heretofore has been oxen, but it seems now that oxen stand this part of the trip the best. 25 miles.

17th. Course still down the river—crossed a considerable branch of the Humboldt, probably the Kanyon creek. The Humboldt here is very swampy. Had some of our horses mired—general complaint of like nature. The road last year followed down the bottoms, but this year the water is so high, that the bottoms are one complete swamp, and as a consequence we have to keep on the sage plains and cross ridges, making the road longer and worse to travel, and also to wade in the mud and cut grass for our stock. Passed another grave this evening of a man killed by an Indian; also some men digging a grave for one of their comrades who had died. There is an abundance of red clover along this drive in the low grounds. 32 miles.

18th. Continued down the river—stopped and set the tire for our wagon. This afternoon we entered a canon leading across a spur of the mountain, distance about 12 miles, and without water. Camped on a small creek, with but little grass. A horse was shot a short distance from us by the Indians. 23 miles.

19th. About five miles from our last night's camp we crossed a mountain brook of excellent water, then entered a canon which we followed for 26 miles, the first 14 without water. After turning the summit, and descending about two miles we came to a spring of pure cold water by the road side. We camped this night on the Humboldt and swam our stock across the river. Our camp presents the appearance of a populous village. There are probably not far from five hundred men in it, besides many women and children. Found good grass on the opposite side of the river. 33 miles.

20th. Our road to-day led mostly away from the river, crossing some ridges in the forenoon; in the afternoon left the river and crossed a level sage plain to the base of the mountains, where we found some poor water and some grass. We followed along at the base of the hills until we reached within a few miles of the river again and camped on a bottom covered with heavy grass, and slough water. This is the best point to stop at to recruit on the Humboldt, as there are miles of good grass equal to the less cultivated meadows, and but little alkali, and by taking some pains, water may be had. It will be known by the emigrant by this description: The road leaves the river and runs directly to the hills, the river bearing to the left. The hills which you approach also bear to the left, until they approach the river, which takes a short turn around its base. The road when it reaches the hills turns to the left and follows the base of them until it strikes the river, then passes around the rocky rugged point of the mountain next to the river. After you pass this point you come into extensive salt and alkali plains. You will find good looking grass in some places, but it is so much impregnated with salt and alkali that your stock will run down on it all the time. The best place to stop here is a few miles before you reach the point of the mountain. Turn off to the left towards the river.

The day has been hot and the dust oppressive. No person in the States can have an idea of the dust in this country until he has been here. A

man will settle to the ankles at every step, and his eyes and nostrils are filled with it throughout the day; and when the wind blows it is suffocating. The country is volcanic, the mountains being composed entirely of lava and cinders. We found a new variety of currants here, yellow variety, which are very good. Fuller picked a large quantity of them to-day. 30 miles.

21st. Sunday. We drove about eight miles to-day, passing the point of the mountain and camped near the river in a clover patch. There are a number of warm springs near the road by the point of the mountain. 8 miles.

22d. Left the river this morning and traveled down the second bank of the river, a nearly level plain covered with alkali and wild sage, but no grass. We went to the river once, although out of the way. The right hand road is 18 miles without grass or water, very dusty and disagreeable. Water very bad, even that in the river; camped on the river bank, no grass on our side. The boys swam the river about fifteen rods wide here, and rigged a sort of ferry with our piquet ropes, and ferried grass across on them for the night, no small job for 17 horses. 23 miles.

23d. Started this morning at four o'clock, A. M. From camp it is 14 miles to water or graas. Two miles from camp the roads branched in every direction, and the course of the river is hidden entirely by the mountain which seems to circle the whole country like the rim of a great basin, with the exception of a gap far to the right. The plain spreads out to the mountains level and desolate, a desert. This labyrinth of roads gave rise to one of the most ludicrous scenes that I ever saw. For myself, I had been lost from my wagons since daylight, without being aware of the fact, and like the rest had taken a wrong road. About noon I found some good clover and stopped to bait my horse. When I started again, on rising a gentle activity I found the plain alive with teams and men, who looked as though they had been struck with the confusion of Babylon. Some were driving in one direction, some in another, oxen, horses, mules, wagons, horse packers and foot packers, were hurrying across the plains, without seeming object, in every direction as far as the eye could reach, and in the most delightful confusion imaginable. Two hundred wagons and numbers of packers had lost their way, and knew not which way to turn, and as usual in such cases were going every wrong way. I rode up to a man and asked him what the deuce was to pay; if all the people were mad? He was as much in the fog as I was. Presently some packers came along who said they had been to the end of the road, and that they were lost. This explained the confusion, although not very satisfactory of itself, for we began to fear that we had inadvertently been following some old cut-off which would take time to retrace. By good fortune I succeeded in finding one wagon belonging to our train, where I got some dinner. Our train had become broken up as well as the rest in the confusion, each one going on his own hook. After dinner I struck out in the direction where I thought to find the river, and found I was right, and about night was so fortunate as to find the 'ballance of the train,' who had succeeded in reaching the river ahead of me. Emigrants, that is the Fools Meadow. When you get down below the point of the mountain which I spoke of before this, and come to a great basin, surrounded on all sides, but a gap far

to the right, don't you pay any attention to that gap, nor come to the conclusion that the river takes a turn and runs through it, for it don't do it, but you keep the extreme left hand road, and you will find that the river runs right through the mountains as high as they look. The right hand roads are all camping roads, and extend some of them 12 miles to some clover patches, and the old Lawson cut-off leads through that gap on the right, where an Oregon party went two or three years ago and nearly all perished. Many stopped and made hay at these clover patches, thinking they were at the desert, but don't trouble yourself here, for you have got a long dreary march of a week's duration before you get to the Great Desert. We traveled hard all day to get 14 miles on our journey, but I think the emigrant who reads this will remember the Fools Meadow, and avoid the same mistake. The emigrants now begin to experience a want of provisions. Flour, pork and sugar are one dollar per lb.; coffee 50 cts., fresh beef 25, and not much to be got at those prices. 14 miles.

24th. About four miles from last night's camp ground we came to a watering place near where the river passes through the mountains. The road leaves the river here and crosses the mountains eight miles, rough road and dusty, no water. Swam the river for grass to bait our horses at noon. Passed the grave of a man who was drowned whilst getting grass across the river. Camped at night on the river; had to wade three sloughs to find grass. 20 miles.

25th. A few miles from where we camped had a bad deep creek to cross, where we found plenty of dead stock. Immediately after crossing passed over a rough stony ridge for about two miles, between two cone shaped hills or mammelles. This point is about 110 miles from the meadows at the sink of the Humboldt, and there is but little grass on the route. Litwiler cut his wagon in two and made a cart of it, we then drove about eight miles and camped. Roads sandy, weather hot. This river beginning to lose itself and grow smaller. I killed three sage hens this morning, which were very desirable as we are getting short of provisions. 18 miles.

26th. Traveled over 18 miles of very bad road to-day. It was over a table of the mountain. The sand was six inches deep, for most of the way, and the day hot; our stock suffered severely. Passed much dead stock and piles of wagon irons. Killed two sage hens—mosquitoes quite troublesome; camped on the river bottom which is narrow; but little grass. 18 miles.

27th. Started at four o'clock, A. M., traveled down the river two miles, then left the river, struck across a desert plain 12 miles to the river; many think this the Great Desert; it is desert enough, but not the Great Desert. This point will be known by a high mountain dividing two valleys. The river runs to the right of this mountain. At noon we had to feed our horses on willows, there being no grass. We got some rushes by swimming the river. We have now got far enough along to begin to have a sight of the Elephant. The river here runs through narrow clay banks like a canal. Passed the grave of a man found in the river; camped at night on a sand bank, put our horses across the river; gras poor. 17 miles.

28th. Sunday. Crossed a sand ridge about two miles, and travelled down the bottom about four miles, where we found some grass and camped. Our horses are failing fast. Kit Carson says truly that the Humboldt is the burying ground for horses and oxen. We pass daily great numbers of dead stock at the camping grounds, in the sloughs, and in the river. The river is nothing but horse broth, seasoned with alkali & salt. The appearance of emigrants has sadly changed since we started. Then they were full of life and animation, and the road was enlivened with the song of "I am going to California with my tin pan on my knee." "Oh, California, that's the land for me," but now they crawl along hungry, and spiritless, and if a song is raised at all, it is, "Oh carry me back to Old Virginia, to Old Virginia's shore." Well, they say misery loves company, so we can have some enjoyment after all, for there is plenty of that kind of company. No one seems to know where we are, even those who traveled the route last year, several of whom are along. Last year the road led immediately on the bottom, but this year it is on the sage plains or second level of the river, the bottoms being so swampy that they cannot be crossed. The Mormon guide for this end of the route, is good for nothing. Yesterday was the worst day for dust that we have had. Every body was literally covered with it so that the drivers could not be recognised.

6 miles.

29th. Litwiller and Ranahan killed three antelope yesterday. They packed in two of them about eight miles from the mountains. They arrived in camp about 11 o'clock at night. Passed the clay banks, some perpendicular banks on the opposite side of the river about 50 feet high. From this place is a desert, the river running through narrow clay banks, void of vegetation except the Artemesia or wild sage. The road generally follows the plains back from the river, only approaching occasionally for water. We camped about three P. M., and managed to get a little grass for our horses.

15 miles.

30th. Started at four A. M.; route similar that of yesterday. We are now in sight of the Pyramid, a lone peak nearly opposite the upper slough of the sink commonly called the meadow. Road touched the river once or twice to-day for water, but no grass, nothing for feed but willows.

16 miles.

31st. Started at one o'clock, A. M., struck the river again 10 miles from camp; no grass, only an arid sage desert. From this it is 25 miles to the slough or meadows, and 13 to water, which will be found at some springs in the gully directly opposite the pyramid. We reached the springs about 10 o'clock, A. M., although one of our horses gave out, which delayed us somewhat, and reached the upper end of the slough about noon, where we obtained some rushes and flags for our horses which they devoured greedily after their long fast on willows. The pyramid at a distance resembles an ancient Mexican pyramid, rising by steps. It may be seen for 40 miles up the river, and serves as a beacon, for the slough or meadows. After baiting we continued down the slough about six miles to some passable springs, and to where there is better grass. We found two cities of tents at the slough quite populous. They would do honor to more civilized countries. The road for a few days past has been strewn with dead stock. I counted to-day 120 head of horses, mules and oxen,

and got tired of it before night at that. I suppose I passed 50 head more that I did not count. If there is any worse desert ahead than we have found for 70 miles back, I don't know what it may be. I have noticed several dead horses, mules and oxen, by the road side, that had their hams cut out to eat by the starving wretches along the road; for my own part I will eat the lizzards which infest the sage bushes, before I will eat the stock that died from the alkali. The destitution has reached its height now. Hundreds are entirely out of provisions, and there are none who have any to spare, and but very few who have enough to carry them into the mines. Often, almost daily, will some poor starved fellow come up to the wagon and pray us in God's name to give or sell him a crust of bread; some of them asserting that they have eaten no food for two, or even three days. Money is no consideration for food here; no one will sell it for money, but we always give enough to prevent starvation, when thus importuned, although we have not over five days' provision on hand, putting our trust in Providence for the issue to ourselves—for so long as there is game in the mountains we will never starve.

To-day is the first, since the third day of June, that we have been out of sight of snow for a whole day; it has been excessively hot, the dust rising in clouds; roads bad, owing to the deep sand. 32 miles.

August 1st. Remained camped to-day, preparing hay for crossing the Desert, which commences 20 miles from the slough or meadow. There is an abundance of grass at this point for all the stock that can ever reach here. We have to wade to get it, then cart it to the channel, and boat it across that in a wagon box. A man with his wife came into the camp last night on foot, packing what little property they had left on a single ox, the sole remaining animal of their team; but I was informed of a worse case than this by some packers, who said they passed a man and his wife about 11 miles back who were on foot, toiling through the hot sand, the man carrying the blankets and other necessities, and his wife carrying their only child in her arms, having lost all their team.

2d. We still remain at the meadows. A team came in yesterday evening from Sacramento, loaded with provisions. They ask for rice \$2 50 per lb.; for flour \$2 00; bacon \$2 00; whiskey \$2 00 per pint, and brandy \$3 00 per pint. We killed a cow this evening which we had picked up a few days ago at a camping ground, where she had been left on account of lameness. She was not exactly beef, but she was better eating than dead mules and horses by the road side; we divided her up in the train and among the starving people who are about us, only saving a small amount for ourselves, which we jerked and dried.

3d. We are still lying by. About two miles below our camp are some falls in the river, at which point the meadows terminate. There is no more grass from here until we reach Carson River, about 66 miles.—Some of the teams that left us above Fort Kearney came in to-day, entirely destitute of provisions, and had been so for some days, although they had contrived to starve along somehow. We heard of them before they got here, and saved a little beef for them.

4th. Sunday. Broke up camp and started again. We had stopped three days to recruit our horses before taking the desert, and although we have taken the utmost pains with them, they are weaker now than when

we stopped. My advice to all is not to make any stop at this point, but push on to Carson River, for there is so much alkali in the water and grass here that your stock will not recruit. There is no water for the next 20 miles fit for stock to drink. We lost one horse to-day from watering beside the road, four miles before we got to the sink. He died in thirty minutes after drinking, in the greatest agony. Two others were much injured, so much so, that we could only get them to the sink with the greatest difficulty. Trimble and Sublet also lost one. Beware of shallow water along here. 20 miles.

5th. Reached the Sink last night about sunset. This is a basin about 80 rods wide and half a mile long. It is usually the last water found on the Humboldt, or where it loses itself in the sand, hence its name, but this year the water is so high that it runs down several miles further before it entirely sinks. There is no grass here whatever, nothing but desert. We broke up our wagon to-day and made pack saddles, being convinced of the impossibility of getting our wagon across the desert, since the loss of the horse yesterday and the injury to the others. Last night while we were making our supper on coffee and boiled corn, soon after dark, a man came to us and asked for a drink of water. I gave it to him; after drinking he stood looking wistfully at our corn, then asked me if I would take half a dollar for a pint cup full of it. I told him I would not take half a dollar for it, for money was no consideration for food here. He said no more, but turned sorrowfully away, when I stopped him and asked him if he was in distress. He said that he had eaten nothing for two days but a small piece of dried meat which a man gave him. I then told him that I would not take a half dollar for the corn, but that he was welcome to sit down and eat his fill; for although we were nearly out of provisions, we would divide with a man in distress to the last morsel. He stopped the night with us, and took breakfast, and although urged to stop and cross the desert with us to-day, or take some corn with him, he would not do it, but said that he had taxed our hospitality too much already, and left us this morning. His name was Bayell, he belonged in one of the central counties of Illinois, and was a man of standing and influence at home, and a brother of the L. O. O. F. He said he hailed when he came up to our camp, but it was so dark that I did not see his hail, or I should not have put him to the test, to see whether he was really needy or not. Sublet and company, and Williams & Co. left us this morning to cross the desert; we got our pack saddles completed, and took the desert at 2 o'clock, P. M., and traveled all night. Two of our horses gave out, the same that were alkaliied, and we left them. About midnight we reached the first wagon road where we found about four acres of wagons left to decay on the desert; this is the first sand ridge; we passed two other wagon yards before morning at similar ridges, besides great numbers along the road, many of them burning. Who will accurately describe this desert at this time? Imagine to yourself a vast plain of sand and clay; the moon riding over you in silent grandeur, just renders visible by her light the distant mountains; the stunted sage, the salt lakes, cheating the thirsty traveler into the belief that water is near; yes, water it is, but poison to the living thing that stops to drink. Train after train drag their tiresome course along, man and beast suffering all the pangs of thirst toil on, feel-

ing, knowing that the burning sun finds them on the desert in the coming day, their sufferings will be enhanced ten-fold, if worn out with fatigue and thirst they do not faint by the wayside and give up altogether. Burning wagons render still more hideous the solemn march; dead horses line the road, and living ones may be constantly seen, lapping and rolling the empty water casks (which have been cast away) for a drop of water to quench their burning thirst, or standing with drooping heads, waiting for death to relieve them of their tortures, or lying on the sand half buried, unable to rise, yet still trying. The sand hills are reached; then comes a scene of confusion and dismay. Animal after animal drops down. Wagon after wagon is stopped, the strongest animals are taken out of the harness, the most important effects are taken out of the wagon and placed on their backs and all hurry away, leaving behind wagons, property and animals that, too weak to travel lie and broil in the sun in an agony of thirst until death relieves them of their tortures. The owners hurry on with but one object in view, that of reaching the Carson River before the broiling sun shall reduce them to the same condition. Morning comes, and the light of day presents a scene more horrid than the rout of a defeated army; dead stock line the roads, wagons, rifles, tents, clothes, everything but food may be found scattered along the road; here an ox, who standing famished against a wagon bed until nature could do no more, settles back into it and dies; and there a horse kicking out his last gasp in the burning sand, men scattered along the plain and stretched out among the dead stock like corpses, fill out the picture. The desert! you must see it and feel it in an August day, when legions have crossed it before you, to realize it in all its horrors. But heaven save you from the experience.

An incident occurred this evening which shows well of the selfishness of some people on this route. It was soon after dark; we had taken off the packs to rest our horses, and were sitting and lying in the sage bushes beside the road; one of our companions had a few miles back been compelled to leave a horse, which from mistaken feelings of sympathy for the poor animal, he had neglected to kill. While sitting there, a company of packers came along the road, when, although it was so dark that I could not distinguish one animal from another, our friend caught up his rifle, cocked and presented it towards one of them, exclaiming in an angry tone, "Get off that horse, you g——d d——n——d scoundrel, or I'll shoot him down under you." The fellow slid off the horse instantly, when our friend gave him one of the "dog-onit-est" blowings up, as the Missourians say, that one fellow ever got for riding the poor animal after he had given out. It was our friend's horse, who, dark as it was, recognized his faithful animal. The fellow sloped without saying a word in his defence.

6th. Morning still finds us dragging our weary steps along on the desert, with nothing near but endless sand hills and beds of clay. Passed Sublett's and Trimble's and Williams's wagons, which they were compelled from loss of stock to leave. Reached the last sand 13 miles from Carson's River, about 10 o'clock, A. M., where we found a water station, and bought some water for our horses at 75 cts. a gallon. We left the pack of one horse here for the station keeper to bring in at night, and the boys went on with the horses, leaving Fuller, who was pretty much done over, and myself, behind. They reached the river about four o'clock, P.

M. We were fortunate enough to find some old friends, I Welch, and T. Ranahan, who had got up a shelter for themselves and oxen, of tents, cloths, and wagon covers, to protect them from the sun. We stayed with them through the heat of the day, and about night started again, but turned off about a mile from the road to visit a small salt lake, where we found a very good spring of fresh water and a sulphur spring. This lake is about three miles from Carson River; its waters are more salt than the most salt brine, and its shores are encrusted with pure salt. Its bed was evidently once the crater of a volcano. We reached the river about 10 o'clock, P. M., but could not find our camp it was so dark, although we found the next day that we had passed directly through it, but the loss of tents, wagons, &c., rendered it impossible to distinguish our comrades who were snoring away, wrapped in their blankets. However, after straggling around until towards midnight, we found the tent of some old esteemed friends, Esq. Hoffman & son, who gave us a hearty welcome and a spare blanket, which, (having already filled ourselves with God's beverage from the Carson River,) was to us a perfect elysian. 46 miles.

7th. There are several stations here, at which they sell flour at \$1,50 per lb.; meals at \$2,00 a head, and liquor at \$1,00 a drink, and measure it themselves. There are great complaints of stock stealing here, some of the station keepers having a hand in it. About 20 men went down the river to-day to take some stock away from the Indians, which they had stolen. Among them, I saw Mountaineer Jack. He was riding a pony upon the full gallop, his hair, which would reach over his shoulders, streaming in the wind; he was dressed in buckskin from head to foot, sunburnt and bearded, his head guiltless of any other covering but that of nature's; he presented the most perfect specimen of a wild man, conveying to the beholder a feeling not unmingled with dread as he approached, rifle in hand, and his belt stuck full of revolvers and bowie knives. But Jack is always the poor man's friend, and shabby as he looks, his pockets are always lined with the yellow boys. He is now here at the station, ever ready to take part in whatever comes up, whether it be a game of French monte, a frolic, or to make a foray upon the Indian villages in the mountains, or recover the emigrants' horses. A good story is told of him, of an incident which transpired a few days ago. He was then over the desert on the Humboldt. A couple of starved foot packers came across him, and taking Jim from his wild appearance to be some destitute emigrant as bad off as themselves, and as misery loves company, hailed him with, "Halloo, friend, we had better travel in company; you look as if you had seen as hard times as ourselves. Jack stopped and looked at them until they came up, when he asked them what they meant. They told him that they were starving, and had neither provision nor money.— "What!" said Jack, "are you going to starve in this fine country? You are a couple of d——d fools if you do." They replied that they had no money, and if they had it would not buy food here. Jack put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a 10 dollar piece and gave them, telling them to go and buy some flour. They then started for the river to where there were some trains in sight, and Jack along with them. They found on the river a large train, the men of which were feeding flour to their mules.— One of them walked up to the captain of the train, and stating their con-

dition and circumstances asked him to *sell* them some flour. He refused to do it, telling them he wanted it for his mules. They told him they were starving, but he replied that he must look out for himself before he did for other folks, and that they might as well be off. Jack stood a silent listener to the conversation, but when he found that the captain would not let them have any flour, he walked up to him and asked him if he would let the men starve. In reply the captain made an insulting response, when Jack raised his fist and gave the captain a blow in the teeth, sprawling him on the ground, and telling him that he was worse than a d——d digger to refuse starving men flour, when he could feed it to mules; he left him and went with the packers to where they succeeded in buying some flour.

Moved our camp up the river six miles to better grass. Saw Bagwell again; he said that he never came so near perishing as he did in crossing the desert; that having nothing to eat but the piece of dried meat, which being somewhat salt, made him thirsty, and having no water, his tortures became almost insupportable, and that when he reached the first water camp, his tongue was swollen so that he could not keep it in his mouth, and had turned black; that he expended his half dollar, (which was all the money that he had) for water, which enabled him to reach the river, where he got a meal of victuals on credit, and went to work cutting grass and getting it across the river at sixpence a bundle, and was making five dollars a day at the business. He left the road where we struck the river for us to come up to where he was, and he would have all the grass ready for us that we should want gratis, but finding grass, we were not compelled to tax him.

We had a California court in camp to-day. A couple of Irishmen got a man drunk, and after getting him to lie down, laid themselves down one on each side of him. Presently a man from Pike co. Ill., came along, and said that they were picking his pockets. Seeing that nobody else would interfere, I went to him, tumbled him over and took the money away from him, when the bystanders, a crowd of whom had gathered around, picked him up and kicked him out of the camp. When this was settled some men came forward and stated that the other one had picked another man's pocket who was then drunk in a gully near by, then tumbled him over, and found as drunk as he pretended to be, he got over it very easily when his turn came. He jumped upon his feet and denied the charge so vehemently, and with such brazen impudence, that many thought I was mistaken and wrong in holding him to it. I insisted on taking him to the man who was robbed, which was done, when he admitted that he picked his pocket, but said the man was his brother, which we found to be true; this so enraged those who had spoken in his favor, that they whirled him around and commenced kicking him out of the camp. In the affray he drew a revolver, which was instantly knocked out of his hand. A man on the bank of the river seeing the revolver ran for it, which led to another scuffle, those who were kicking him supposing him to be a friend to Barney, but the man succeeded in getting the pistol, which he instantly threw into the river.

A man was found dead in a wagon on the desert this morning; he probably died of hunger and thirst. The Carson River is about 12 yards

wide at this place, and three feet deep. Its banks are composed of ridges with narrow bottoms covered with willows and scattering cottonwood trees, with some grass. 6 miles.

8th. Litwiler and company sold their horses this morning and started on foot. Ford, one of our men, went with them, leaving but four of us; we being nearly out of provisions. A man came to our camp this morning who had lost everything on the desert, his team, wagon, provisions, and father; he had been without sleep or food for two nights and a day, and was pretty much worn out. I made him a cup of coffee, and gave him some boiled corn, which having devoured, he laid himself down in the shade and slept until evening, then went in pursuit of his father again.—He was from Missouri.

A man came near being drowned near us this morning, but was saved by a person standing on the bank, who plunged in and brought him out. He tumbled off his horse while crossing the river, which frightened him so much that he could not help himself in the least. The traders here buy horses of the emigrants for from two lbs. of flour to 10, per head.—Such is the destitution. I saw one horse, saddle and bridle, a very good one too, sold on the desert for three gallons of water.

9th. Started again this morning, taking along the Missourian who lost his father. We consumed the last of our rice this morning, leaving us reduced to six quarts of corn, and three lbs. of dried meat for four of us. The road soon leaves the river and strikes across the desert, making the river again about two miles from the Carson River meadows. The Missourian and myself followed up the river and found a very good packing trail; we killed two turtle doves which sustained us through the day. Saw snow again to-day on the tops of the Sierra Nevadas. 22 miles.

10th. Camped on the meadows late last night, where we remain to-day to recruit our horses. Jonathan and myself went into the mountains hunting, found a few deer, but they were so wild that we could not get a shot; killed a large yellow rattlesnake, a sage hare, and found an old Indian and boy fishing, traded my pocket knife to the boy for a line with 10 bone hooks I attached to it, caught about 40 small fish, and got back to camp about dark.

11th. Sunday. Still remain in camp. Fuller left us this morning, having concluded to pack through on foot with Dr. Cody, of our county. A man died near us last night. He was picked up on the desert and brought thus far by some gentlemen from Davenport, Iowa. He was left there by his messmates sick, without food or water, and when found, his hands and face were so blistered by the scorching sun that the skin all peeled from them, leaving them as raw as a piece of beef. Poor fellow!—When found he was crying in the most excruciating agony for a drop of water to quench his burning thirst. Burning at the stake would be too merciful to the hardened wretches who left him sick and helpless on those burning sands. The gentlemen who picked him up had been lying by two or three days at this place expressly on his account. One of them was a physician; although the poor fellow was a stranger to them, they tended him with all the assiduity of brothers.

12th. Started again this morning, but our road led across a sand plain

12 miles wide, when we struck the river again, following a packing trail, thus avoiding the desert back from the river. 22 miles.

13th. Our road followed the river until noon, when we had another stretch of desert for 13 miles. The valley begins to narrow somewhat. 23 miles.

14th. Passed through a canon seven miles, continually crossing brooks of cold clear water from the mountains—beautiful meadows and rich land on the bottoms. Desert plains back, and still back lofty Sierra Nevadas, their sides covered with the evergreen pine, their summits with snow.—Passed some hot springs, and trading stations. The latter have little to sell but whiskey; some few of them beef. 27 miles.

15. Passed the Mormon station, saw a party of Californians and Mexicans prospecting. There is gold this side of the mountains. Entered the seven mile Canyon, which begins the real pass of the Sierra Nevada. A branch of the Carson River runs through it, which stream we follow to its head. The Canyon is a wild, picturesque place, with perpendicular wall of gray granite hundreds of feet high, with lofty pines in the bottoms, and a perfect chaos of granite blocks rent from the walls above. We were compelled to camp in it with nothing for our horses to eat, which somewhat destroyed the romance of the thing; as for eating ourselves, it is so long since we have had anything to eat that we don't trouble ourselves about it. 23 miles.

16th. Got out of the Canyon into the valley, and stopped to bait. Drove about six miles and camped for the night; grass abundant in this valley. J. Ingalls killed a California partridge to-day. It is larger than a partridge in the States, and finely flavored. 8 miles.

17. This morning we had the Nevadas to climb; this is the point which will stop the Pacific Railroad on this route, if anything will do it. This rise is said to be 9000 feet in 13 miles. After climbing the first mountain we descended to a lake, which is the head of one of the branches of the Sacramento. It is the crater of an extinguished volcano. The next mountain, the Snowy Peak, is still worse than the last, although both for most part of the way are as steep as the roof of a house; in climbing it our road lay over the snow, which was 20 feet deep for 80 rods up its side. Having reached the top of the snowy peaks, we took a cut-off, descended about two miles and camped at a small brook where we found good grass. We had the good fortune to shoot three woodchucks [ground-hogs,] this evening which, in addition to three lbs. of flour we coaxed out of a Californian, made us feel as rich as the Rothschilds. We have not eaten for the last two weeks (all of us) as much as one man would have eaten if he could have had all that he required, consequently we are living in the greatest luxury and abundance to-night, having all we can eat. It does not take much to make man happy after all; here we have been starving along for the last month, crossing deserts, drinking rotten, alkali or salt water, or deprived entirely, and now we've got to the top of the Nevadas, around our camp fire amid snow drifts, with plenty of good water and three woodchucks for three of us, and we are the happiest mortals alive; we seem to have forgotten that we ever suffered privation. 16 miles.

18th. Killed another woodchuck this morning; begin to feel as if we are getting into a land of plenty again. Passed a small lake at the foot

of the snowy peak, which was well filled with spotted trout. We made a mistake and took a wrong trail this morning, after passing the lake which took us over some tremendous granite ridges to ascend and descend which we had great difficulty, often climbing and descending bare smooth rocks for rods at a place, the horses frequently sliding down such places on their haunches. We found good grass in the ravines, which was some compensation for the badness of the route. We got out to the road about dark, and reached Leek, Springs where we found some grass, and camped. 18 miles.

19th. Our road lay along the summit of a ridge covered with heavy pine and cedar forests, but no grass, and but little water. Had nothing for our horses to eat but brush this evening. A man was shot just back of us. A trader had left the road to look for grass and water, when coming to a fallen tree by a thicket, several men rose up from behind it and snapped a gun at him, which did not go off, but the trader's revolver did, tumbling one of them into the bushes, and the trader went off too, before they could make another attempt. 28 miles.

20th. We Passed the forks of the Weaver Creek and Hangtown road, but got on a wrong trail which we followed nearly to the Weaver Creek. Found plenty of grass and cut enough to supply our horses for the night, which would have cost us in Hangtown about five dollars. Met some miners who, not knowing the country much better than we did, directed us to go back by the way of Johnson's Ranch, which was about 12 miles, when we were by the right route, only seven miles from Hangtown. We reached the diggings at the head of the emigrant ravine, three miles from Hangtown, about nine o'clock, P. M., and camped. 20 miles.

21st. Leaving packs and horses in camp we entered the town this morning, where we found great numbers of our friends and county people, as also my brother, who had reached the mines 25 days ahead of us, having started on the Council Bluffs route at the same date that I did. 3 miles.

CALIFORNIA—GENERAL REMARKS.

Having reached the mines, I shall close with some remarks in relation to the country, &c. California is a country of contrarieties in every respect. Probably there is no country so much belied, for, generally, those who admire the country and speak in its praise, tell the truth in such a way that it amounts to a falsehood, when judged by the lights which his audiences in the States will have, to enable them to understand him, while the man who has been unfortunate gives it the same false coloring when detracting from its merits, and what is worse, both parties speak literally the truth, but unless his auditors have been here they cannot obtain a correct idea of the country. It is the best country in the world, and at the same time the worst, as every man will find that comes here, according to the circumstances in which he may chance to be placed. It is thought that the diggings are exhausted, but from observation I am satisfied that so far from this being the case, their riches have only begun to be discovered, and although the gulch and ravine diggings are pretty much worked out, yet all those mountains and hills composed of gravel and earth, will be found to contain riches of great value, on the surface of rock upon which they rest. Mining hereafter will be attended with greater expense, on account of the depth which the miner will have to dig to reach the gold, but there will be rich gold diggings in California for a hundred years to come, in my opinion. Great sickness has prevailed thro' the fall in the mines, there being buried from Hangtown alone about 13 a day. At the least calculation, one fourth of the emigration of 1850 have, or will die, by the first of January 1851. Miners at this time are getting but small pay, very many not more than paying board. Almost all who came here thought that they should make from 12 to 20 dollars a day, but instead of those prices, they are glad to get from four to eight per day, and very many do not make but half that sum. Yet nevertheless California is a good country, and if people would move to it with their families, and make their homes here, in a few years they would be richly paid.

The old adage, "a rolling stone gathers no moss," is exemplified every day here. The same restless spirit that prompted men to come, keeps them constantly on the move while here. Many who are making from three to six dollars a day, work until they obtain two or three hundred dollars, then hearing of richer diggings otherwheres, pull up and leave sure work and travel until they have spent what they have got and a month or two in prospecting, when they become strapped, to use a favorite expression here, and are compelled to work for less pay, until they make a raise, when the same spirit puts them in motion again. I have known men who have been here two years, and have sometimes had a thousand dollars on hand, that, when I saw them, had not a dollar, and were compelled to obtain credit to enable them to live for a time until they could make a raise again, and all the result of this restless spirit. In my opinion one half of the aggregate time of the miners of California is spent in

traveling from one section of the mines to another. California may be properly divided into four ranges, or divisions. The first, the alluvial bottoms of the rivers or bays, and the plains, which comprise all of the agricultural country in the State, the area of which would probably amount to one half of the area of the State of Illinois. This range is exceedingly fertile, probably equal to any soil on the earth. The climate is excellent, the air pure and healthy, neither too cool nor too hot, and well calculated for the products of a temperate climate, as well as many of tropical. Grass grows on the bottoms all the year, and farming may be carried on in all months of the winter, if not prevented by the rain. No frosts ever nip the crops, and the seasons present a perpetual spring. The plains are somewhat elevated from the bottoms, gently rolling, and resemble our prairies. The soil is fertile, but cannot be cultivated without irrigation in the summer, although crops are raised by sowing in November and December, which enables them to get so far advanced by the commencement of the dry season as to avoid the drouth. In the spring they are covered with a great variety of flowers, wild oats, and clover. The timber on this range consists of live oak, and various oaks resembling white burr and black oak, besides various shrubs. The second range is the lower hill or mountain range, which is also the gold range. The soil would admit of cultivation if it could be irrigated, but this would be impossible, from the nature of the country. It will be only available for its gold, which is inexhaustible in my opinion, although the business of gathering it will not be as profitable hereafter as it has been. The timber in the range consists of the various kinds of oak and pine, with some cedar and spruce; it is not valuable, but will answer the wants of this range for the present. The third range is the timber range, which in time will be the most valuable part of California. Probably no part of the world will furnish such pine and cedar timber. The valleys are filled with trees from two to three hundred feet high, clear from limbs nearly to their tops, and of the best quality for lumber; many of the trees from five to ten feet in diameter at the foot. I saw a pine tree said to be 11, and a cedar 15 feet thro', and have no doubt but such was the fact. They can only be got out of the mountains by railways or the rivers at flood time, consequently it will be some years before the attention of the Californian will be turned to this branch of trade. But little gold has been found in this range, or probably ever will be, as the quartz veins, the original deposit of gold, if they exist at all in it, lie deep under the granite ridges.

The next range and the last lies upon the bald peaks of the Sierra Nevadas, and is too much elevated even for timber to grow to any extent. Their summits are covered eternally with snow, and their sides, where uncovered, present a barren shingle, or ragged walls of lava. But little gold is found in this range, and I know of no use of it in the economy of nature except to hold the world together. The valleys fit for cultivation, are so cold that vegetation cannot grow, except grass, which is of better quality where it can grow, than in the two next lower ranges. This range was also the district of volcanoes, the extinct craters of which indent the mountains in every direction, and are now generally lakes and ponds forming the heads of the various streams. The water in them is very pure and clear; they are well stocked with trout. By their sides in many places, the

ragged perpendicular walls of lava rise thousands of feet high, black and gloomy, as it cooled off, when thrown from the bowels of the earth. The east side of the mountains on the descent to the Carson Valley is well timbered, and furnishes some good gold diggings, although not very much prospected. The Carson Valley is perhaps one of the most desirable farming districts in California. The bottom is very fertile, and covered with a heavy growth of wild clover, wheat, oats, &c. The plains by the side of the bottoms are barren deserts covered with wild sage, and utterly worthless. The climate is very favorable to the growth of the cereal grains, but the nights are too cold for corn. It is best calculated for stock growing, and is capable of supporting a population of many thousands.—The air is very pure, and the water power and water very abundant, and of excellent quality, the valley being well supplied with numerous small clear streams of ice cold water, running from the mountains across the valley, and emptying into the Carson River. The California railroad, if built by way of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, will follow up the valley of this river, in which case this fertile valley will soon teem with populous villages of civilized men, instead of the few squalid, thieving diggers who are now its sole tenants.

The gold digging of California is much less profitable than it was in 1849, the shallow ravine diggings having been pretty much worked out, but there is no doubt but that the hills still contain inexhaustible supplies, which though attended with greater expense in obtaining, will nevertheless pay well for working, when the same shall be worked by a permanent settled population, aided by mechanical science. It is folly in my opinion for a man to leave home and family, with all his home interests, to go to California for a mere temporary sojourn for one or two years. A man should take his family and household gods with him, and make a permanent settlement, which would aid him very materially in his business prospects. He would then remain in one location, and would consequently save both time and money. And there is another gain in locating more permanently, that is in acquiring a better knowledge of his location. Every section of the mines has its distinct characteristic, and a person having learnt the location and features of gold deposits in one section, in removing to another will have to learn this anew. When this fact is taken into consideration it will be quite evident that a man will always succeed best when permanently located. Any man of sober, industrious habits, who may make his home in California, will in 10 years, with ordinary luck and health, and the vicissitudes of life, acquire a fortune sufficiently ample to maintain himself for the balance of his life in the old states, but many who have resided for that length of time in California, will be unwilling to leave its beautiful climate to go back to the old states to live in their variable climates.

Many conjectures have been put forth as to the cause of the deposits of native gold on the surface, and many have asserted that it came there by being thrown out of the craters of volcanoes. This idea is now pretty much exploded amongst intelligent miners. It is evident that the gold originally lay in the quartz mines, and has been loosened by the action of fire decomposing the quartz, and by abrasion of the atmosphere and water. In evidence of this it will be observed that in those sections

richest in melted or deposit gold, there are but few gold bearing quartz veins, and those bearing evidence of great heat, while in those locations rich in quartz veins, there is but little surface gold, and that very fine, and generally found on the bars of the rivers, and along their banks. The whole country has at some day been in a state of fusion, as the quantity of cinders found in the gulches bear ample testimony, and in those sections where the heat was greatest, the quartz became intirely decomposed, allowing the gold to drop like molten lead upon the slate and granite substratum, where when undisturbed by the action of water, it now remains imbedded in the rock. This is not mere opinion, but a statement made from personal observation in working in deep diggings, where it was evident that the gold had not been disturbed since it was melted from the quartz veins, I having frequently taken pieces from the slate that fitted the interstices as closely as it would have done if I had melted it myself and turned it in to cool.

The best mining country appears to be a strip of land about 30 or 40 miles wide, running north and south, or nearly so, and extending the whole length of California, and as I have been informed on reliable authority as far north as Puget's Sound, where gold has been found in small quantities. This information I had from a gentleman of intelligence and observation, from Missouri, Mr. Sherwin, who spent the summer of 1850 at that place. The quartz veins also lie in this general course, one of which may be traced hundreds of miles. No great amount of gold has been found out of this district, although it is possible that in time it may be, but in my opinion, if the original stratum of quartz veins extended back into the mountains, that it there ceases to be the surface, and becomes the substratum; if this proves to be the case, there is no estimating the mineral wealth of California. It will take ages to exhaust the supply. The supposition that this stratum does reach back of the now known district, under the mountains, is a reasonable one, as the rock in view, generally, on the first range or plains, is slate; in the second range, quartz veins resting in and on slate, in the third range granite ridges, with occasional spur quartz veins in view, and on the fourth or summit range, either granite, or molten rock, or lava cooled off, as it was cast out of the numerous extinguished craters, California furnishes a great field for study to the geologist, and much may be learned which is not now known, and which will be useful in developing her vast resources.

Many suppose that gold was not known here until discovered by the Americans. This I am disposed to doubt, but whether known to civilized man, or only the native digger, I would not hazard an opinion. A discovery which occurred immediately under my own observation, satisfies me that the gold had been sought for many years before that time. A miner in sinking a hole at the head of the Spanish Ravine, which had been one of the richest in California, found a plain gold ring of rude workmanship, soldered together with silver, or some white metal, about four feet from the surface of the ground. On the inside of it was a cross stamped very legibly, indicating that it was made by a christian. This was in new diggings, where the earth had never been disturbed so far as appearances would indicate, and moreover he found but one small piece of gold besides that in the claim. How long it would take to form four

feet of solid earth, or how it came there, no one can say, but certainly it must take a great number of years for that depth of soil to form, and the ring itself shows workmanship of an early and rude age.

The limited space of this work necessarily precludes me from going into a lengthened detail of incidents and description of California, but in closing I must remark that California, from its variety of climate, which is so great that a man may walk in a day from the region of snow through a temperate climate to another of perpetual summer, where the flowers cover the earth, and render the air fragrant with their perfume. From its great resources in gold and other mineral treasures, and its boundless forests of pine and cedar, from its great amount of water power, and its great agricultural and commercial advantages, is yet destined to be the first State in the Union, as it now is the most pleasant to reside in, and it behooves our government to so cement the bonds of union in commercial interests—while now cemented by the feelings of "Padre pais"—with a belt of iron from ocean to ocean, with the iron horse with the sinew of steel and breath of fire for a messenger, that the time may not come, when the diverse interests of the Pacific states may induce their inhabitants to form a government of their own.

It is a well known fact in history, that a country divided by a great natural barrier, cannot remain long under one government, but that their several interests call for separate governments. The great natural barrier between the Atlantic and Pacific States is, the Rocky mountains and the deserts, which can only be overcome by railroads, which will bring the two sides of the continent within a few days of each other, and render much now useless territory available, either in an agricultural, manufacturing or commercial point of view. Although the country, from the Missouri river to the Pacific, is quite as well adapted to the building of railroads—if we except the Nevada Mountains, and this exception would not apply to the Oregon route—as any of the eastern States, yet no private company can, or should be allowed to build such road, but it should be a national work, and subject to the regulation of the government, for the good of the people, when completed. If it should be built by a private company, it would become one of the greatest and worst monopolies in the country, rivaling the British East India company monopoly. This may not be so evident to a person who has not traveled the route, but I believe that every thinking man who has traveled it will agree with me. This is a matter which it were well for our legislators to consider well and act upon before it is too late, for it will soon be found that those routes now opening through Central America and the Isthmus, will not answer the wants of the growing commerce with the Pacific, and every year is cementing the bonds of interest between California and Oregon, and the Spanish countries on the Pacific.

But I must bring my work to a close, and bid farewell to California, its lofty snow capped peaks, its beautiful valleys, its flowery plains, its rapids rivers and broad bays Farewell! It was with a feeling of sadness, that I turned, on the last range of hills to look back towards those busy valleys teeming with life and energy, and when on the planks of the vessel crossing the bar into the broad ocean, I turned to look for the last time on the Queen City of the Pacific, embosomed in hills, by the sparkling waters of the Bay. But home, family and friends, call me away. Farewell Reader!

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miles; to Jackson's Tavern 18 miles; to Brass Balls 22 miles; to Antioch 28 miles.

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(Another route quite as good, but distance greater, is by way of Racine, and another by Rochester on the Fox river. Antioch is 25 miles from Rochester, Wis.)

Antioch, June 1852.

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